



ELsie LOOKING AT THE STARS. — *Page 176.*

# THE HAZELWOOD STORIES

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## “LITTLE DAUGHTER”

BY

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**"LITTLE DAUGHTER"**

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## “LITTLE DAUGHTER”

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### CHAPTER I

“



H, ho! what's going on here, to-day, Mack? another holiday?”

And Mack Harkins, who had been for long years the faithful keeper of the railroad station at Hazelwood, looked up into the face of the speaker, and answered,

“ Yes, another holiday, Simon, but not a very merry one, I can tell you, though.”

Everything about the little village of Hazelwood seemed to say differently, however, unless one were to study

closely the faces of the villagers themselves; and so, to a stranger coming into it, it was no wonder that Simon the pedler, who was making his annual trip with his pack of small wares, was misled into thinking it a gala holiday, for surely something out of the common order was happening in the village this hot mid-summer day on which our story opens.

The factory, with all its busy life, had been closed at the noon-day hour, and the great wheels were silent. The simple village folk, old and young, looked trim and neat in their holiday attire, as they waited at the street corners, or under the shelter of the big trees, that invited a rest beneath their wide-spreading branches; but more especially near the station, where the local train stood, noisily getting up steam.

Men and women, yes, and children, too, stood waiting with the look of eager expectancy upon their sun-burned faces.

And what was it all about? you ask, as did Simon the pedler, who repeated his question:

"A holiday is it, you say, Mack? but not a very merry one?"

"What do you have it for then? Why don't you all go to work, as I do?"

"I've travelled way from Clovertown to-day. Started this morning at day-break. Haven't sold much *neither*; only a paper of needles to an old lady down the road a bit, who wanted to know if they were 'sharps.' Of course they're sharp! what good would they be if they *wasn't*?"

"My! but isn't it hot?"

And Simon took off the tall white hat he wore and wiped his forehead with a great red bandanna handkerchief that could easily have served for America's "star spangled banner" in all its brilliancy.

Neither was it difficult to imagine Simon, himself, a genuine "Uncle Sam," so tall, gaunt, and awkward. His thin face was made to look still thinner by a scrubby growth of chin whiskers, that had just the faintest suspicion of a dye upon them.

He always wore a tall white hat, and said he did so, because it was cooler to his head in summer; but as there was no way to explain on the same principle why he wore it in winter, it was thought that he took pride in trying to look like the pictures of that same

American relation, for he had often been heard to say,

“Yes, I’m a born Yankee; growed down East, and transplanted wherever I can make an honest living.”

And he was a born Yankee at a trade, at least, for although the boys along his road of travel had nick-named him “Simple Simon,” because he would never tell them his whole name, he was anything but simple at a trade, but was always a credit to his Yankee birth and shrewdness.

Suspended from his neck by broad leather straps, he carried his pedler’s pack, a strong basket, with a shiny oil-cloth covering, that did not, however, fully hide all his wares.

Peeping out from the basket, were shoe lacings, russet and black, while

tapes and ribbons of various colors and widths hung over the sides, and received many a teasing jerk from the boys, whose teasings Simon always received in good-nature, however.

A look into the basket showed many a trinket to gladden the hearts of the older maidens, and toys for the little ones.

So Simon sang with truth, although with not a very musical voice, his own little song, as he moved about among the villagers of Hazelwood:

Needles and pins,  
All sorts o' things;  
Who'll buy?  
Lacings for shoes,  
And all in twos,  
Who'll buy?

Not content with elbowing his way through the chattering crowd on the platform, Simon walked into the depot.

On its rude white plastered walls were the startling bill-posters that told in bright lettering of the coming of the "Greatest Show on Earth"—which, by the way, was as likely to have been years ago, as to be in the near future.

One of the townspeople was just calling Mack Harkins' attention to this latter fact as Simon entered.

"Say, Mack," said the man, "why don't you pull down that poster off the wall? The circus has been and gone long ago. Won't be here for another year about, and if you had as many little people in your house as I have in mine, you would know something of the trouble made by such pictures. Why, I have to give weekly pennies to my little folks to lay by against the coming of the elephants, and

they count up, I can tell you, in time, Mack.”

“That’s so,” replied Mack, “they must; but I kind o’ like to keep ‘em to sort o’ trim up a bit. Then, too, it looks to strangers a little like life, as if something was really going on in Hazelwood — but — I’ll tear ‘em down to-morrow,” he added.

Alas! that to-morrow never would come, for Mack’s promises, although always well-meant, had been forgotten too many times before, and so the pictures would, no doubt, still continue, as they had for years, “to trim up a bit” the staring plaster walls of the village station of Hazelwood.

“Well,” interrupted Simon, “I put my mark on that ere man over there, who seems to be eating

Needles and pins,—  
All sorts o' things,”—

and he finished in his usual sing-song manner, pointing, as he did so, to the picture of the man who was advertised to eat “glass and all sorts of things.”

“ However, Mack,” continued Simon, “I don’t need any such pictures as those to-day to tell me something is going on in Hazelwood. No, indeed!” he added, in a very emphatic manner; then continued:

“ But I don’t believe in holidays much, ’specially for poor people like me, Mack. No, sir, only two for me, if you please,—Christmas and the Fourth of July. That’s enough for me, and for any one, in fact.

“ Each tells the birth of freedom,—freedom from sin and bondage, for soul and

body. Old and young can understand the blessing of both o’em, and the old can get comfort, and the young can enjoy the fireworks and Santa Claus. Eh, Mack? ”

And Simon fell again into his sing-song manner, as he elbowed his way through the crowd, advertising his wares.

Needles and pins, —  
All sorts o’ things, —  
Who’ll buy?

Meanwhile the crowd kept adding to its numbers, and jostled one another in a friendly way. Now and then a hat would have to pay the penalty, and was knocked awry, but the spirit of the hour granted a pardon before it was asked, even.

Simon the pedler had, at last, found a

customer. He walked up to a stout motherly-looking woman who held by the hand Jessie, her youngest child, a tiny girl who seemed quite out of place in such a great crowd, and who could (and did!) only resort to mercilessly crying aloud to make herself known, when it threatened to bury her from sight.

"How d'ye do, *Miss Bailey*?" said Simon in a very familiar way, which every one excused from Simple Simon.

"How d'ye do?" he repeated. "What can I do for you to-day? Eh?" he asked, carefully turning back the oil-cloth covering of his basket.

"Pretty well, thank you, Simon," replied the lady addressed, adding in an interested way in keeping with her motherly nature, "And how have you been for the year past, Simon?"

"Oh," replied Simon, "I'm not what I was once. I'm full o' rheumatiz, and other ailings. I'm sort o' hoping to go home, down East, one of these days and live out my last years."

Then, assuming a pleading tone, he said, "Won't you help me to get there, and buy well of me to-day, *Miss Bailey*? Now, see this 'ere knit doll. Don't you want to buy it for sissy here?"

And he patted Jessie under the chin as if by the little attention hoping to reach the mother's heart, and, it is to be feared, with a shrewd eye on her purse as well.

But Jessie's bright eyes had spied out all the questionable beauties of the monster in green, red, yellow, and purple that Simon held in a very tantalizing way before her face, and was tugging away at its feet, and crying—

“Jessie 'ants it!—Jessie 'ants it!—  
P'ease, p'ease, mamma, p'ease dive it to  
Jessie!”

“Yes, and Jessie shall have it, too,” interrupted the strong voice of a man, who added,

“With your permission, of course,  
Mrs. Bailey—forgive me for interfering,  
my good woman.”

So the hideous knit doll was put into Jessie's little hands, hardly big enough to do else than to grasp its marvellous head-piece, which was decorated by a tiny brass bell, and Simon's heart leaped with joy as he opened his well-worn chamois purse to receive the silver coin of his unknown benefactor.

It was all done so quickly, that Mrs. Bailey could only accept the apology of the giver, for seeming to humor the teas-

ing child, as she looked up into the face of the Rev. Mr. Oldrive, who said in his kindly manner,

“I remember, Mrs. Bailey, that this little maiden has a birthday very soon, so please let her have it as my birthday gift, won’t you?”

“Ah! Simon,” said Mrs. Bailey, as Mr. Oldrive turned away, “that is the way that man has crept into our hearts here in Hazelwood; always doing just such kind things. Such a memory as he must have! Why, he remembers every one. And,” added she, “that is why we are all here to-day, Simon.”

Now, Simon the pedler, who had not as yet had his question fairly answered, and seeing the prospect of gaining the much-desired information, asked again:

“What’s going on here to-day, any-way, *Miss Bailey*? A picnic?”

“Nice day for it,” he added.

But Mrs. Bailey, like Mack Harkins, did not seem, at first, inclined to talk very much about the day, and briefly answered Simon, saying,

“No, Simon, Hazelwood is bidding good-by to one of its very best friends to-day.”

Simon’s persistency was not so easily quieted, however, and he pursued the subject with his true Yankee thirst for knowledge, saying,

“And are you all so glad to have him go, that you turn out like this, *Miss Bailey*? ”

“Yes,” replied the lady, “we are glad to have him go, if he will only come back to us strong and well. He goes

home to England for a stay among his people. He has been given a few months' leave of absence," and in a very knowing way she added,

"Oh, we can all guess who has helped him to go. No one has ever said, but don't every one in Hazelwood know how much good Judge Goodwin up at Falcons-height does in this little village?"

And Mrs. Bailey gave another knowing toss to her head, and turned away, but blushed to find herself face to face with Judge Goodwin himself, who had come, like the rest, to add his "God-speed" to the hero of the hour, the good man that everybody loved, and never thought to inquire about, as to what kind of a minister he was, knowing him only as a kind friend to every one in Hazelwood.

And true it was, that the Rev. Walter Oldrive was starting on a journey across the water, and to each one he had a kind word of parting to offer.

"Take good care of that cough of yours, Mrs. Hunt," he said to the widow who had carried the distressing cough about with her for so many years, that she would be a stranger among her own, even, without it.

"Ned," he said, grasping the hand of a manly boy in the crowd,

"I shall hope to hear good reports of you while I am gone, and when I return we will see which of us knows the more about triangles and parallelograms."

And Ned Ashton, whose pride was touched, resolved at once, to be such a close student while Mr. Oldrive was ab-

sent, that even if he could not hope to know as much as the latter about geometry, he would, at least, know more than he now, did.

But the engine was giving its timely warning, and just as Mr. Oldrive was about to mount the car steps, having bidden a general good-by, a little girl whose golden hair blew about in the summer wind, and now and then helped to veil the beautiful blue eyes, oftentimes filled with tears she could not keep back, ran breathlessly through the crowd, with her hat hanging behind her.

She rushed up to Mr. Oldrive, who bent to kiss the sweet face upturned to him, as he said,

“Good-by, Elsie. Any message for Old England, little girl?”

“Good-by, dear Mr. Oldrive, good-



“ ANY MESSAGE FOR OLD ENGLAND, LITTLE GIRL? ” — *Page 26.*



by, sir," said the child, and added, sorrowfully, "I don't know any one there but my Uncle Jack, and I never saw him, either."

"Well, and if I see him," interrupted Mr. Oldrive,—"if I see him,—what shall I say to him for you, dear?"

"Tell him, Mr. Oldrive," replied Elsie, hesitating a second, as if to word a short message, easily remembered,

"Tell him I love him, and to be a good man, just as my papa was."

"Yes, I will, Elsie," said the clergyman.

"You may be sure, that I will, and I shall tell him, too, that there is a little miss in Hazelwood, named Elsie Lovelace, whom he ought to know better. Good-by, dear, I shall leave all the little people of Hazelwood in your

care, and I know that Judge and Mrs. Goodwin, and your dear mother, will have a care over their elders."

Then turning to the crowd once again Mr. Oldrive said,

"Good-by all. If God wills, I shall be with you before the snow flies. So, fatten up your turkeys, that I may break a lucky-bone with you at Christmas-time, if not before. Think of me, all of you, as I shall of you. Friends and neighbors, good-by!"

"That we will!" came back in hearty response from the assembled crowd of villagers, although a tell-tale tremolo in some of the voices told how great would be the vacancy left in many hearts.

The engine gave its shrill whistle, and Mr. Oldrive waved a good-by from the car platform, dodging every now and then a well-worn slipper or a

shoe, that, as if by magic, shot over his head or about his manly form.

It seemed for the moment, much as if a cyclone had visited the shop of Dan, the village shoemaker.

Even Simple Simon became so worked up to the enthusiasm of the hour, that, forgetting all sordid thoughts of money, and his Yankee shrewdness, even, he drew quickly from his stock of small wares, a pincushion of blue silk, in the shape of a ladies' slipper, and, with a fling, sent it flying for good luck after the traveller.

It landed at the top of the car, just as the train drew out of the station, and Simon joined as lustily as any one present, in the parting salute—

“Good by! Good by! Three cheers for England!—and a tiger for America!”

## CHAPTER II

THE picturesque village of Hazelwood looked radiant in all its summer glory. Its tall trees swayed in the Western wind, and their rustling leaves seemed like Nature's fitting chorus to the songs of the twittering birds, that lived among the branches.

Hazelwood people were like one united family, having one common interest, and that interest was the great silk factory, whose resonant bell summoned the villagers to their daily work.

Its great untiring wheels, and its gay reels and bobbins, kept busy hands at

work all through the long days. The village was a stranger to poverty, although it could hardly be said that any great wealth made its fame.

No, Hazelwood village folk were a thrifty, hard-working people, and little rows of neat houses dotted the streets of the village.

Each had its own pretty garden, bright with old-fashioned flowers; with the stately hollyhocks in their varied hues, and bright petunias, while at the back of the houses was almost always seen the brilliant sunflower, for Hazelwood people loved the latter more than ever, since the tradition that had come with the newly named, if not newly fashioned, disease of "Malaria," that the flower was a protection against the latter hydra-headed monster.

The woodland road that skirted the village led to the great stone house "on the heights," where Judge and Mrs. Goodwin opened wide its doors with a welcome for all.

Falcons-height, it had been named; a pretty name for such a large English-looking estate, and wisely named it was, too, for ancestral records had made the falcon dear to the hearts of the Goodwin family.

Here they had lived since the time when first they had made Hazelwood their chosen home. They had come to the quiet village, hoping that a change from city life, and the pure air of the country, might bring strength to their little crippled girl; but Faith Goodwin had now been for more than a twelve-month with the angels, and the great

house, though lonely at times, was crowded with sweet memories of their little daughter, while Elsie Lovelace and her mother, whom chance had brought to them, were welcome guests at Falcons-height, and it had now been their home for more than a year as well.

As the crowd about the station dispersed, more than one was heard to say :

“ What would Hazelwood do without the Goodwins? ”

And indeed it would be difficult to tell all the good that shone out from their lives into the hearts and homes of the sick, and reflected itself everywhere about the little village of Hazelwood, and Mrs. Bailey had said rightly enough, when she intimated to Simon, that Judge Goodwin had made this journey across the water,

possible for the much-beloved village clergyman, for the former's “Godspeed” was only the seal to his blessing, and the very generous check that Mr. Oldrive now carried in his breast pocket.

“ Come,” said Mrs. Goodwin to Elsie. “ Are you going to ride home with me, little girl? Your mamma, here, is going to spend the night with Mrs. Oldrive, she tells me, and the Judge says that he is determined to settle up about Mr. Saundier's pension before he closes his eyes in sleep to-night.”

“ Yes, little daughter,” said Mrs. Lovelace, who stood by, “ you will go home without mamma, like a good girl, won't you? I shall put you in our Lady Bountiful's care, for Mrs. Oldrive will, I know, be lonely to-night, and so I shall stay to try and cheer her loneliness, if I can.

Will you miss me, little daughter? Good-by. Kiss mamma."

"Good-by," replied Elsie. "Of course I shall miss you, blessed mamma; but you always do just the right thing, anyway, so kiss me, and good-by." And Mrs. Goodwin and Elsie stepped into the yellow-wheeled carriage, that Elsie had named Cinderella's coach, since that first day, when, a little more than a twelve-month before, she had found her way in it, to the hospitable doors of Falcons-height.

The sun was shining hot and bright, and something about the day reminded Elsie of that same memorable one.

"Godmother dear," she said,

"Do you remember that day you met me at the station, a year ago? I do. Of course I have been very happy with you

ever since, but it seems such a long time ago. Doesn't it?"

And the child's face added much to her words.

"Yes, indeed, Elsie, I remember it all very well," said Mrs. Goodwin.

"I remember the holiday week, and I remember the birthday-party." Then, as if wishing to turn her thoughts from intrusive memories, she said, turning to Elsie:

"Elsie, child, what a queer message that was, you sent your Uncle Jack. How did you happen to send it, I wonder?"

"Why?" asked Elsie, "wasn't it all right, godmother?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Goodwin, "it was right enough, but it was such an odd message for a little girl to send an uncle, whom she has never seen."

"Well, it won't do any harm, godmother, anyway," said the child, "for you see, if Uncle Jack is as good a man as my papa was, he is as good as he can be; and if he isn't, why — perhaps it will make him better, who knows? and so, you see, I think he'll be glad to hear from me.

"One day, too, I heard mamma and Mr. Oldrive talking together about Uncle Jack. I couldn't help hearing, truly, and mamma said, she hoped that he was a better man than he used to be, because he broke my dear old grandma's heart."

"Oh, that explains it," said Mrs. Goodwin. "We will wait and see how Uncle Jack receives it, then."

Yes, we will all wait, and later, follow the message across the water. Wait to enter the lonely life of the English uncle of Elsie Lovelace, as he welcomes

the loving message from his dear niece, for a word from a little child has, in by-gone days, helped often to brighten and to "lead."

So Mrs. Goodwin and Elsie chatted on until they arrived once again at Falcons-height.

Its doors were opened by a good-natured looking colored woman, whose life had counted many years of faithful service for the Goodwin family.

"Well, Rachel," said Mrs. Goodwin, "here we are back again."

"And right glad I am to see you back, missus, and you, too, miss."

Her little mistress Faith had always been called "Missy," but she had once said,

"That 'y' is mighty valerble to me."

Every one supposed that Rachel would

some time marry her constant lover, Samuel Johnson, but one day she announced that he had "been taken to the *'firmatory* with an *inexcusable* disease, and, missus," she said,

"I never had mos' too many brains, so I reck'n I hasn't a powerful lot for two of us uns; an' ole Sam Johnson is a heap best off in the *'firmatory*, and so, if missus will let me, I declar' to stay whar' I can see the churchyard over thar'" — for the churchyard of St. John's was sacred to the memory of her little mistress.

That evening, after supper, as Mrs. Goodwin and Elsie sat in the home-like sitting-room, the former proposed that they "take a trip to London, too," reaching up, as she said so, for the stereoscope and its basket of foreign views.

“Oh, yes, let us, godmother dear. We'll get there before Mr. Oldrive, won't we? and back again, too; only I suppose that we can't go to see Uncle Jack, can we? because we don't know just where he lives. I wonder if Mr. Oldrive will really find him, fairy godmother?”

And Mrs. Goodwin seemed to speak in a very knowing way, Elsie afterwards thought, when she replied,

“If he searches very carefully, we may expect to hear from your Uncle Jack, Elsie, before the leaves fall.”

“But come,” she said, as she placed the foreign views one by one before Elsie, “come, let us pick up our luggage, as the English say, and start now.”

“Yes, here we are on board the great steamship, little girl, and soon we will land in Liverpool. And here we are,”

continued Mrs. Goodwin, as she followed with the pictures the journey through England.

"Here, here we are in London, the great noisy city of London."

"How funny everything looks, godmother! What is it?"

"Why," replied Mrs. Goodwin, "we have landed in the great city in a genuine London fog, and if we do not tread very carefully behind our guides who carry their lanterns, we may land, I hardly know where, so I think that we had better enter a hansom and go up to our hotel."

"Here we are," continued the narrator. "Here it is,—a grand affair, is it not?"

And she placed before her young travelling companion, the picture of a very imposing London hostelry.

So the two went on, and on, journeying in fancy through the beautiful parks of the city of London, now, picking their way with the busy crowd through the shopping centres, now, stopping at the little old lady of Thread-Needle street, and again, reverently walking through Cathedral aisles.

And the evening came to an end, with the journey's end, and bed-time for Elsie, came with both. Bidding Mrs. Goodwin good-night, she said,

“ Good-night, godmother dear. I'm so tired that I really don't know as I ever would care to go to truly London, unless it was to see my Uncle Jack.”

“ Some day, little girl, we may all go together, perhaps.”

“ And see Uncle Jack?” asked Elsie.  
“ I hope so, dearie, but we will wait a

while at least," replied Mrs. Goodwin, as she bent to kiss the upturned face of the child.

That night as Elsie knelt by her little bed, Rachel, who had stepped into the room to help her undress, heard her say,

" Please God make my dear Uncle Jack a good man, just as my papa was."

And the angels heard, too!

## CHAPTER III



DAY in the woods!

Only those who have had the pleasure, can tell of the great joy to be found in searching out the buried treasures that lie hidden beneath the carpet of green, that Nature spreads on the floor of her great pavilion.

The crackling of the pine needles 'neath the feet, is like music to the merry picknickers, and the long brakes are gently turned aside by the true lovers of Nature, as if protecting old friends from injury.

So it was, that Elsie Lovelace went to her bed that night, dreaming of this pleas-

ure in store for her on the morrow, for she was to be one of a party of children, to search out the wild-flowers in the woods about Hazelwood.

Her surprise was great, when she woke to the morning sunlight and found her mother sitting by her bedside.

“ Why, my blessed mamma! ” cried Elsie,

“ Where did you come from? and how did you ever get here so early in the morning? I thought you were going to spend the day with Mrs Oldrive, mamma dear.”

“ Oh, little daughter,” replied her mother, “ a kind friend brought me early to you, for I wanted to see you before you went to the woods. I wanted to see that you went well protected from the dampness of the ground, with rubbers, and wraps, and the like. Farmer Allen

was coming along in his open wagon to look over his new farm, just above here, and he offered to bring me along. He said he hadn't 'a very *stylish rig*,' he knew, but the old man was very kind, and really quite good company, so I forgot all about the 'rig,' as he called his wagon, although I was reminded once or twice, that I was not in Judge Goodwin's Victoria, to be sure, for now and then, a pitchfork would touch my arm in not a very friendly manner, as the wagon lurched under farmer Allen's driving. He was 'taking up a few farm utensils to his men,' he said. So here I am, little daughter, to wish you a pleasant holiday, and to smile with the sun upon it, and you, too, little girl."

"Oh, how glad I am to have you get here before we start, mamma! for

soméhow I don't believe the day would have seemed quite right to me, without your sweet smiles, dear blessed mamma! Is it breakfast-time?" said Elsie.

“Yes, little daughter,” replied her mother.

Just then came a knock on the door, and Rachel's voice called:

“Bress you chile, bress you! I reck'n you'd best fly roun', miss.”

“Oh, Rachel, am I late?” asked Elsie.

“No, miss,” replied Rachel, “not zactly, nor mighty early neither. James's getting the horses ready, and the wagon is just decklerated with green boughs, mos' like a ban' stan'.”

Rachel's ideas of the “band stand” were somewhat confused with the memories of a grand wedding at the South, when she had been one of “Massa Barrow's”

slaves, whose daughter had made a princely match with a foreigner. At that time, the orchestra had been hidden, as is customary, behind palms and flowers, and Rachel had called it a “ban’ stan’.”

Elsie made haste and joined the family at the breakfast-table.

Sure enough, outside the window stood the picnic wagon, almost hidden with green boughs, and James had placed around his somewhat worn straw hat a wreath of maple leaves, while a great basket of the garlands stood by his side.

As Elsie appeared at the door, he insisted upon crowning the little maiden, and addressed her very respectfully as “good Queen Elsie.”

It was planned that Rachel should accompany the party to look out for the

needs of the children, and she, likewise, was made to wear one of the green garlands, Elsie herself decorating the black hat, whose rusty band of crape was hidden 'neath the bright leaves.

Rachel bowed as the decoration was given her, and said,

"Thank ye, miss. I'll wear it 'cause your lily white hands put it on, miss, but green never was 'specially 'coming to my complexion."

Extra seats had been put in the wagon, and a big luncheon basket, with tin dippers tied to it, was the special care, on the front seat, for Rachel and James.

Judge and Mrs. Goodwin, and Mrs. Lovelace, stood in the open doorway, and each was eager for the happiness of the children's day.

"Good-by, little girl, good-by," they all said in unison, as the picnic wagon started on its way.

"Have you remembered a box for your ferns, and a basket for your flowers, Elsie?" Mrs. Goodwin asked.

And Elsie held up, in reply, a long pasteboard box and a pretty basket, and said, "Yes, fairy godmother, see!"

"And your rubbers — where are they?" asked Judge Goodwin, to whom Elsie replied,

"Blessed mamma can tell you all about those, dear godfather. Good-by, mamma; good-by all."

James tightened his hold on the reins, and the picturesque wagon started from Falcons-height, to gather on its way to the woods, the merry party who were to join in the day's pleasures.



"THE PICTURESQUE WAGON STARTED FROM FALCONS-HEIGHT." — *Page 50.*



Little girls in bright gingham dresses, and white aprons, mounted the wagon, each receiving from Elsie, a wreath of green leaves with which to decorate her hat.

And, too, there were a few bright-eyed boys who joined in the merry time, and the wagon, as it turned away from the village of Hazelwood, was a pretty sight, while the children's happy voices told of joyousness and health.

When the party reached the woods, all dismounted from the wagon, and James unharnessed the horses, and became guardian over them and the luncheon baskets, while Rachel sauntered along with the children.

The woods rang with the laughter of the little people, to whom Rachel gave her orders, saying,

“ Now, chilluns, don’ yer lose me. Done keep yer eyes fixed ’bout straight on me, wharsomever you go.”

And the children, feeling their great need of a leader, obeyed her, although occasionally a voice would cry out—

“ Rachel, Rachel, where are you?” And Rachel’s black eyes would look through the thick foliage, and she would reply to the straggler, who felt assured by her voice.

One of the boys had carried a small book on Botany along with him, which proved its great usefulness, whenever a flower or fern was gathered, that was a stranger to the party.

Elsie seemed to favor the flowers, although a fern would find its way occasionally, into her long box.

When luncheon-time came, the col-

lection of wild-flowers that the children had picked, was varied, and a class in Botany was formed there in the woods, and Elsie was chosen by the children, its leader.

Holding up a spray of the fragrant white alder, she asked for its "Every-day name," and the children, who were so well familiar with the pretty flower, answered promptly; but Ned Ashton's book was referred to, for its botanical name, which Ned was quite satisfied to spell, rather than to pronounce — *Clethra Alnifolia*.

A red wood-lily was next introduced to the children, and as Ned Ashton again turned to his reference book, he said, after he had quoted its longer name — *Lilium Philadelphicum* — that "its dress was pretty gay for a Philadelphia Quaker."

When at the last a little blue violet was upheld, the children resented the use of any other name for it, and cried with one voice to Ned Ashton, as he tried to master its book name — *Viola palmata* —

"Oh, we don't care for that long name, Ned, for it is the dear little blue violet that we all love, no matter for its dress-up name."

So the hours went by, and luncheon-time neared. A cloth was spread on the ground, and served as a table for the goodies that made a bountiful luncheon for the party, for each little boy and girl had opened a basket, and added to the generous thought of the mistress of Falcons-height.

In one of the pauses, the children heard a sound of wheels, and wondered who had ventured so near them.

"Look! look!" cried Bessie Barrett, "here comes Grandpa Stimpson, and do see! what is he dragging? Isn't it a funny wagon? See!"

Grandpa Stimpson had been a newcomer to the village of Hazelwood, having but very recently made his home with his daughter, Mrs. Morris, and only a few really knew the little old man, for he was, in truth, both little and old.

His eyes were bright, and twinkled with genuine fun, and his ruddy, round face seemed always to wear a smile.

"How d'ye do, children?" he said as he neared them,

"How d'ye do? I hope Milly and I don't intrude, but we heard you all laughing, and so, to please Milly here, I dragged her over. Come, Milly, let grandpa lift you out," said the merry old

man, tenderly addressing his little granddaughter.

There she sat, a picture of chubby maidenhood—a pink sun-bonnet almost hiding her from sight, but her bright eyes sparkled with roguish delight, when Grandpa Stimpson offered to lift her out from her rustic coach.

“Come, Milly, dear, come out and see the children. Don’t you want to?” said he.

The children eagerly came forward to take Milly’s hands, and help her to dismount.

“What is your name? Milly, is it?” they asked, as in one voice, and with the one object of becoming better acquainted with the child.

“Yes, my name is Milly—Milly Mor-wis; he’s my drandpa, over there. Tum

drandpa," and she loitered back to wait for her dear old grandfather, who followed close behind.

The children gathered about the little girl, and hugged and kissed her, till it was no wonder that she cried out,

"P'ease, don't dive Milly any more. Dive drandpa some of the tisses, won't oo' p'ease?"

"And how old are you, Milly?" asked Elsie.

"Milly's mos' four," answered the child.

"I'll be four t'-morrow mornin'. I've dot a teeny-tointy bit of a baby bruvver, not so big as me. His name's Herman. He's so tunnin' — not more'n so big" — and the child measured with her rosy fat hand a space very low to the ground, so low, in fact, that her listeners could

only laugh and wonder. And Bessie Barrett asked the child if her brother was "a brownie."

Still the child went on with her story, all her fondness for her "little teeny-tointy bit of a bruvver" showing itself in her happy words and smiles, that like sunbeams seemed to reflect themselves in the faces of her young audience.

"Some day he'll walk, my mamma says," she continued. "I hope he will, 'fore Tristmas, so Santa C'aus 'll see him. If he don't, I'm doin' to send a 'ittle 'etter 'way—'way up c'imney to Santa C'aus, and tell him to be sure to 'member him. Mamma says I may."

"How will you send your little letter?" asked Elsie. "Can you write, Milly?"

"No, Milly tan't, but drandpa tan," replied the child. "Then we're doin' to

’ight it and ’et it do wight up c’imney all  
’fire, jus’ as when my papa ’ights the fire  
in the mornin’,” she added, but stopped,  
as if in thought — then resumed again in  
an almost disconsolate manner:

“ But if Milly ’ights it, and it burns ’way  
up off, how ’ll Santa C’aus wead it then?”

“ Oh, how s’all I det it to Mr. Santa  
C’aus, I wonder. I know mos’ he don’t  
know any sing about my teenty-tointy  
bit of a baby bruvver. Oh, dear, dear!”

For a moment the little girl seemed so  
disappointed, that Elsie, always thought-  
ful, said:

“ Don’t worry, Milly dear. Elsie will  
tell Santa Claus not to forget your little  
baby brother,” and soon the smiles re-  
turned to the little maiden’s face, thus  
assured.

The children shared their luncheon

with the strangers, and in return Grandpa Stimpson amused them by showing them the ferns he had gathered, and telling them some of their queer names.

Opening the door of the funny wagon, he said:

“This is the way, girls and boys, that I take my ferns about. Sometimes I sell them, but just now I’m fixing up a fernery in Milly’s garden.”

A look into the window showed beautiful ferns gathered with the earth about them, for transplanting, and Grandpa Stimpson gave to each of the children a fern, in memory of the day.

“Here, Elsie, this is a maidenhair fern; looks as delicate as you do, little girl,” he said, addressing Elsie.

“Plant it in some rich earth, and keep it moist.”

"And for you, Miss Bessie," continued the old man, "is a lady-fern, for you are a little lady."

To each of these ferns the old man added their respective botanical name, (for he had made a study of his wildwood friends,) saying as he did so:

"If you can pronounce their names, you may call yours, Elsie, the maidenhair — *Adiantum Pedatum*, and you yours, Bessie, your lady-fern, *Asplenium, Filix-fæmia*."

"Whew!" said the old man, as he finished with a shrill whistle, "whew! they about use me up, to speak 'em."

Had his listeners been wise enough, they would have, no doubt, found Grandpa Stimpson's Latin not quite as true as his heart.

"Here, Dick," he went on, "here is the

common fern — *Dicksonia*, — named for you, perhaps — sweet-scented, you see, and if you must smoke, fill up that pretty Indian pipe that Elsie has in her flower-box there,” — for Elsie had gathered some very large specimens of the quaint flower of the woods, commonly called “ Indian Pipe.”

“ Now here,” continued the old man, picking carefully out from the stock of ferns a pretty flower,

“ Now, here is just one little flower that has strayed into my green garden. It looks lonesome enough, so I’m going to give it to you, Miss Elsie, to take home to your good mother. Time was, when women were glad enough to have it, I can tell you, for many a Revolutionary dame steeped its leaves and called it tea, and I don’t know but what it made

about as good a drink, as some of the stuff we call tea nowadays. It is a pretty white flower, isn't it? 'New Jersey tea,' we call it, and its book name is *Ceanothus Americanus*."

So the clever old man went on, distributing his stock of ferns and teaching much to his young hearers, until Grape ferns, and Rock ferns, and Christmas ferns, all found delighted owners, and the children felt their day to have been very instructive, as well as enjoyable.

Then, putting Milly tenderly into the rude wagon, Grandpa Stimpson bade all "good-by" and started on, Milly calling out to Elsie, as she waved her little hand —

"Don't 'oo fordet 'bout my teenty-tointy bit of a bruvver, Elsie, will 'oo?"

And Elsie resolved that the baby

should not be forgotten, and commenced, in her mind's fancy, to invest her little bank of pennies for a jumping-jack and a woolly lamb for Herman Morris at Christmas-time.

The day came to an end, however, and James again took the reins. The children sang their merry school songs as they rode home through the woods.

Sleep came quickly to all that night, for the fresh breezes, and the pine-scented woods, wove their charms about the dreams of the young sleepers of Hazelwood.

## CHAPTER IV

 "NOW, little daughter," said Mrs. Lovelace, entering Elsie's room, a few weeks later.

"Now, little daughter, I wonder if you can ever guess what I have for you this morning, dear?"

And Mrs. Lovelace stood with her hands hidden behind her, as Elsie made an attempt to solve the riddle put to her.

"A book? oh, is it a book, blessed mamma? I hope it is," said Elsie.

"No, guess again, little daughter," said her mother.

"A picture, then; am I right now?" asked Elsie, eagerly.

"What kind of a picture, dearie? You are getting 'warm,' as the game has it," said Mrs. Lovelace.

"Oh, am I? a picture? a photograph, then? — a photograph of" —

But Elsie did not finish her sentence, and so was interrupted by her mother, who asked,

"Of whom, Elsie?"

"Oh — of — somebody!" replied the child, as if in despair.

Mrs. Lovelace, feeling that her little girl had been half successful, put into her daughter's hands, a large square envelope, bearing an English postmark.

"Here it is," she said; "a letter, Elsie, and, I think, a picture, too."

"A letter for me!" said Elsie, excitedly; "for me!" she repeated.

Now, a letter for Elsie was really an

event in her young life. All that she had ever received, were the childish notes of her little schoolmates, who had dropped them, at odd times, into the rude wooden box that had been fastened on the wall about Falcons-height, and was called the "Falcons-height Post-Office."

"This is my first truly, real, letter, mamma, isn't it?" said Elsie. "Who is it from, I wonder?" and, like many of her elders, she stood gazing at the writing, and wondering, instead of opening at once, and finding out.

Finally, she tore the envelope open, and, taking a photograph from it, held up the latter to her mother, reading aloud as she did so, the writing on the other side:

To one who loves me, from her

Affectionate

UNCLE JACK.

"Isn't he nice-looking, mamma? He ought to be a good man, I am sure, to look like that," said Elsie.

"But here—here is a letter, too, mamma dear," she continued, as putting her fingers into the envelope, she drew out a letter. It looked to Mrs. Lovelace somewhat tear-stained and blurred, but she listened as Elsie read, and said nothing:

MY DEAR LITTLE NIECE ELSIE: I received this morning a call from the Rev. Mr. Oldrive, just from America, and since seeing him, and hearing from you and your good mother, I feel like a new man. Mine has been a lonely life, little girl, and I blush to say it, a misspent one, too, but, to-day, my heart is cheered with the thought that there is in the great new land of America, a little miss who loves me, and who is interested in her Uncle Jack.

Ah, little one, you will never know how much good your message brought me. It was only a word, true, but if in future years, you shall ever hear of Uncle Jack doing any good in this world, you must think that it was your simple, but loving message, that came to me in my loneliness, and worldliness, that prompted me to do it.

Here, in London, I am rated a rich man, but to-day I feel richer than ever before, for the love of a little innocent child — my own niece Elsie — the child of that brother, who was indeed good, and whose example I shall surely try, for the rest of my life, to follow. Write me often, please, dear child, for your innocent words will, I know, do much to cheer and help me.

I am a sick man, as Mr. Oldrive will tell you, and sometimes, too, I am a very lonely man, also. Will you not send me your picture, and one of your good mother, in return for this of

mine? and to my old time 'sister Sarah,' as to you, I send the love of

Affectionately,

UNCLE JACK.

The letter was dated, and bore the name of "Griffin Gate," that of Mr. Lovelace's London estate.

"And so I have a really, truly, Uncle Jack, after all, haven't I, mamma?" said Elsie, as she closed the letter, not, however, without adding another tear drop to its already stained pages, for her eyes were moist, as she added:

"It seems rather funny, for although I always knew, of course, that he was over the water, why, now, you see, blessed mamma, I can sit down and write to him.

"Poor Uncle Jack! Sick and all alone — too bad, isn't it, blessed mamma?

Don’t you wish that he was here, so that we could take care of him?” she asked in tones of tenderest thought.

“Yes, little daughter,” said Mrs. Lovelace. “I should like much to see ‘Brother Jack,’ as we always called him, in by-gone days. I always liked him, but after your Grandma Lovelace died, the old home was broken up, and since then, I have heard but once of him.”

“Too bad, isn’t it, mamma, that we haven’t a picture to send him?” said Elsie.

“To send who, Elsie?” said Mrs. Goodwin, who entered the room so silently, that she felt almost she was listening to family secrets, and so, spoke, to announce her presence.

“To send my sick Uncle Jack, godmother dear,” replied Elsie. “See! look

at this picture of him that I got from him just now, and he wants mamma's and mine. Do you think, mamma," she said, turning to her mother,

"Do you think that we had better have ours taken by that travelling photograph man that has just come into the village? Shall we, mamma dear?"

Mrs. Goodwin here interposed and answered Elsie's question, for she was always the one to settle wisely all puzzling things. She said, before Mrs. Lovelace could reply,

"No, Elsie dear, I think we will all go to the city the day after to-morrow, and there you can do better. Our old friend, Miss Green, has just written me to know if I can come to her for a day or two, in the interest of some charity. So we will all go together, and give her a surprise.

She wrote me, she wished I would bring you, Elsie dear, and I am quite sure that she will open her eyes wider than ever, to greet your mother. So, day after to-morrow, we will plan for our little journey. Is it agreeable to you, Mrs. Lovelace?" asked Mrs. Goodwin.

"Your wishes are always mine, my kind hostess and friend," replied Mrs. Lovelace.

So all was arranged, that the ladies, and Elsie, should go to the city for a short visit.

"Only think," said Elsie, "I haven't been there since"— and as she hesitated, all knew that she was trying to forget a memory that overshadowed the past, — "since I came to Hazelwood, a year ago," she slowly added.

One year ago! The memories of that year came afresh to the little party standing in the home so endeared to them by its young mistress, whose loss had placed a thorn in their June roses of a twelve-month ago.

Each one of the trio, as if moved by the same thought, looked up at the beautiful, sweet face that smiled at them in angelic beauty from the canvas on the wall, and Elsie, in her simple way, broke the silence, saying,

" Oh, dear little sister, I wish I could look half as beautiful to my Uncle Jack, in my picture, as you do to us."

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The next day was spent in getting ready for the city, although there was really very little to be done, except to remodel, a bit, the white spotted muslin

frock that Elsie had worn on her memorable birthday of the year before.

Elsie had asked to wear it, so that she could “tell Uncle Jack,” she had said to her mamma, “all about the party and sister Faith.”

The following afternoon they took the train for the city, and arrived at Miss Green’s, where their welcome was most cordial.

“ I am so glad that you have all come,” said their hostess. “ Now, rest to-night, and to-morrow ”—

“ To-morrow I am going to have my head taken off,” said Elsie, with a merry laugh.

“ Your head taken off, Elsie ? ” repeated Miss Green, and turning to the ladies, she asked,

“ What does the child mean ? ”

Mrs. Lovelace explained that Elsie had come to the city to have her photograph taken.

"Well," replied Miss Green, "the child is nearer right than she even imagines, for I allow it is almost like having one's head taken off, to sit for one's picture. Sometimes I have thought that artists imagined a hidden pivot existed in the back of the neck, upon which to turn the head of the victim, at any and every angle desired. Ugh!"

"But good-night all, and good-luck, Elsie, for the morrow!"

And the weary travellers sought their beds.

## CHAPTER V



HEN Elsie opened her eyes the next morning, the sun was streaming across the room, and making itself very familiar with the pictures on the wall, and the gay flowers on the carpet. The rumbling of the wagons, and the sound of the street cars, were sounds now new to her, after her quiet mornings in the country.

“Mamma, blessed mamma,” she said, “wake up! wake up! for I heard the breakfast-bell ring, and you once told me, that time I was going alone to Hazelwood, that it wasn’t polite to visit and

keep your friends waiting at meals, and I'm so very hungry, too! Are you awake, dear mamma?"

“Yes, little daughter,” replied her mother, in a very wide-awake tone,

“Yes, dearie, I am awake, and I have been, for a long while; I have been thinking of our modest home where Miss Green found us in this great city. Thinking of all the changes in our life. They would read like a story, Elsie, wouldn't they, dearie?”

Thus chatting, Elsie and her mother made their morning toilets, and went down to the breakfast-room.

“Just in season, are we not, Miss Green? Good-morning, and good-morning all!” Elsie echoed her mother's greeting, and the rest responded.

“The sun must have come out to-day

for you especially, little girl," said Miss Green, "for we have been having what the old farmers would call 'a spell o' weather.'"

"Have you selected your artist, Elsie? If not, take my advice and go to Beamen's. All our great people go to him," she added with a laugh.

"But I am only a small, little girl, you know, Miss Green," said Elsie. "Will he take pains with me just the same? for you know, Uncle Jack must see me looking my very best."

"Yes, all things (people), both 'great and small,' as the poet has it, go to Beamen's, so Beamen's it must be, Elsie."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Lovelace in a decisive way, "Beamen's it is, dearie."

Soon Mrs. Lovelace and Elsie were quite ready, and the former carried the

box containing the finery, while Elsie hugged a small, mysterious-looking packet close to her side.

“ What have you there, little daughter? ” asked her mamma.

“ Oh, mamma, that is a secret; please let me keep it a secret, anyway, until we get there.

“ You can trust me, can’t you, blessed mamma? I promise to tell you all about it when we get to the photograph man’s, ” said Elsie.

“ Photographer, sounds a little better, ” said her mother.

“ Well, mamma, when we get to the photograph man’s, then, I’ll tell you all about my secret. So, please wait, blessed mamma, won’t you? ” pleaded Elsie.

Miss Green directed them how to find the studio, and Elsie and her mother

parted at the street corner, from their friends, and went their way, Mrs. Goodwin and Miss Green also going theirs, saying in one voice:

"Good-by till dinner-time," and the latter added merrily,

"Don't look too sober, little girl, and wink as often as you please."

Arriving at Beamen's studio, Elsie and her mother climbed the narrow stairs leading to it, where a ticket was given them, which they showed later to the artist, and they, in turn, were shown into a little dressing-room, to prepare for "the execution," so said Mrs. Lovelace.

Elsie slipped on the little white muslin frock, and a bit of a faded flower fell out from the ribbons, as she unfolded them—a bit of a rosebud, withered and dead.

"Oh, mamma, I wonder how this little

stranger came to be in my ribbons. No, it is an old friend, isn't it?" Then, as if recalling the last time the white ribbons had been worn, she said, tenderly:

"I am going to pin it into my dress and wear it, if I may, blessed mamma. It won't show it is faded, in the picture, and I shall like to know it is there, for, mamma," she added, thoughtfully,—"it means, oh, so many things!"

And Mrs. Lovelace felt that the flower, that had been so overlooked in the packing away of the birthday ribbons, was a memory of that day of the past, and little Faith's blessing upon the present hour.

"Yes, dearie," she replied. "If you would like to, wear it, by all means."

The two ascended another flight of stairs, Elsie still bearing the mysterious-looking packet.

They entered a queer-looking room, so Elsie thought, as she saw about it, the peculiar oddities that go to make up a photographer's studio. Children's high chairs, and rubber toys, hobnobbed in friendly closeness, with tall, dignified-looking pedestals, and dainty five o'clock tables. Scenery, roughly painted on large canvas screens, representing garden gates overgrown with bright flowers, or room interiors, met the eye at every turn.

“We are ready, sir,” said Mrs. Lovelace to the man in waiting, and who seemed lost in thought, as if taking an inventory of his stock in trade, as though to fit his subjects to it, rather than it to them.

“Will you have your pictures taken together, madam?” asked he.

“Oh, yes, sir, I think so. Shall we not, Elsie?” asked Mrs. Lovelace.

"Oh, let us have them taken just as close together as we can get, blessed mamma!" replied Elsie, coming along to her mother's side and imprinting a kiss on her hand, and she added, "if I might, I have such a pretty idea, mamma. I wish I might tell it."

"Do so, miss," said the artist, adding jocosely:

"Anything but trundling a hoop or jumping rope, for you will have to sit very still, you know, miss."

So Elsie was allowed her suggestion, and both Mrs. Lovelace and the artist, were forced to own her choice not only a good, but a very artistic, one.

A pretty room scene was rolled to the back, and Mrs. Lovelace seated herself in a rocking-chair by a low table, both

Elsie and the artist cautioning her "not to rock once."

On the table stood a pretty lamp, and Elsie, before seating herself on the low footstool at her mother's knee, slowly, and almost reverentially, it seemed, unrolled from the secret packet, a picture, framed in a silver filagree frame, and placed it upon the table, facing the camera, saying, as she did so:

"Now, look, mamma, here is my secret! I did so want dear Uncle Jack to have a picture of Sister Faith, too."

The artist liked the arrangement of the picture, and asked Elsie to rest her head even closer to her mother's side. Then he took the black cloth off the camera, having before asked both his subjects to fix their eyes on a picture before them. Elsie was almost moved to laughter,

when she heard Miss Green's parting orders repeated:

“Don't look too sober, little girl, and wink as often as you please.” She hoped that the smile the words caused, would offset the effect upon her, of the picture of the naughty crying baby she had to look at.

In a few seconds the suspense was over, and Elsie sighed with relief, but again, and again, she had to respond to the artist's orders :

“Don't look too sober, little girl, and wink as often as you please.”

When all was over, Elsie and her mother prepared for home. They bade “good-morning” to the artist, who promised them proofs of his work in a day or two.

Elsie, as she greeted Miss Green on her return, said,

"Well, I most had my head taken off, anyway!"

"Perhaps the artist was hunting for that pivot, Elsie," replied her hostess.

So ended Elsie's first attempt at having her picture taken.

## CHAPTER VI



“HEN will the Queen  
Lady come again,  
Nursey Marvin?  
She said she would be  
back before my roses  
faded, and see, this is  
the last one left.”

And the speaker slowly raised to his lips, as if to kiss in reverence for the memory of his cherished “Queen Lady,” a rose of once uncommon beauty, but the leaves fell over the white counterpane, as he did so, and little else than the stem remained in his white hand.

He was a little boy of seven summers, and an inmate of a children’s hospital in the great city of B—.



“HE WAS A LITTLE BOY OF SEVEN SUMMERS. — Page 89.



He was an interesting little fellow, whose pathetic case had made him the pet of the ward, for Jamie Armitage had been brought to the hospital, seemingly a hopeless wreck from a street car accident, and his convalescence towards recovery was a marvel to his doctor and nurse.

For days and weeks he had lain upon his little cot and rarely a friend came to see him, for his mother was a hard-working widow, and his younger brothers were not quite old enough to come without her companionship.

It was no wonder, then, that Jamie's memories of the graceful woman who had stood by his cot but a few days before, and talked so tenderly to him, were such as to inspire the love of the little fellow, and veneration, as if for

royalty, and so he had named her "the Queen Lady."

No one asked, why he had named her so, for the name seemed most fitting for her, who had brought sunshine to the dark lives of the children as she walked about the ward, with a kindly word for each little sufferer, placing a rose here, or a picture card there, in the hand of each child, and made herself the Queen and ruler of each little heart.

All watched her, when on that day she walked up to Jamie's cot and held his wan hand tenderly in her own, and, too, as she stood before the picture that hung by his bedside, and twined it with roses and greenery, saying as she did so,

"Now, little Jamie, I shall come to you again, before those roses fade."

So, to-day, as the last rose was droop-

ing, the little fellow was longing for another sight of the "Queen Lady," and he ventured the question to his faithful nurse:

"When will the Queen Lady come again, Nursey Marvin?"

And the latter, a pleasant-faced woman, full of motherly kindness, and looking the typical nurse in her cap and apron, replied:

"I think, Jamie; we shall see her to-day. Don't you want that I should read to you, from the little book she left you the day she last called?"

"Oh, yes, do, please," replied the boy.

And so Nurse Marvin reached under Jamie's pillow for the little red covered book that the "Queen Lady" had left for him, saying, as she placed it in his hands,

that she hoped "Nurse Marvin would read to him from it, and perhaps, (she hoped so at least,) that he would get a bit of comfort and pleasure from the story.

And Nurse Marvin read on from the prettily bound book — the story of \*Little Miss Faith — the story of the little girl, who had left only sweet memories behind her.

" I shall read you just three chapters, Jamie," said Nurse Marvin, " only three chapters to-day, for we must not have all our goodies at one meal, nor must tired little heads have too many things to think of, even if they are pleasant and happy thoughts."

She was not a reader of any great

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\* Little Miss Faith, first of the Hazelwood Stories published by Lee & Shepard.

merit, but her voice was soothing to little Jamie, who was soon so interested that he forgot his pains.

"And now," said Nurse Marvin, "we will read just this third chapter and then my little boy must try to get a short nap."

When she reached that part of the story, where little Elsie Lovelace started on her journey to Hazelwood, the journey that was the turning-point of her life, Jamie seemed greatly interested, and Nurse Marvin, too, in truth, for she seemed to read with an earnestness unusual to her.

She was nearing the long name of the baby that Elsie had made friends with on the train, when Jamie made an effort to pat his transparent little hands together, as if to clap them with joy.

He was too feeble to make them sound very loud, but looking up to Nurse Marvin with a rapturous smile on his pale face, he said, with as much spirit as his strength allowed:

“ Oh, goody, goody! I know her, I know her! ”

“ You know her? ” said the nurse. “ Why, my dear Jamie, this is only a story.”

“ Oh, yes, nurse, but that is a truly part of it, ” Jamie insisted, “ for I remember that very time, and that very little girl, and we boys nicknamed her ‘ Goldylocks ’ after the little girl in our story book, that Aunt Edith gave us one Christmas-time, and that naughty little baby was my little brother Bony. You’ll see, nursey.”

“ Your brother Bony? ” asked the

nurse, hardly able to hide a smile at the queer name for a child.

“ Your brother Bony? Pray what can his name be, Jamie? I never heard you speak of him,” said Nurse Marvin.

“ His name is Napoleon Bonaparte,” replied the little fellow, in the same words, and with almost as much pride as his mother’s, when on that hot day in June, that Elsie Lovelace made her first journey to Hazelwood, she placed her crying baby into the latter’s outstretched arms.

“ Yes, ma’am,” continued Jamie, “ that’s his name. Nowadays, we’re trying to call him Leon, but we used to always call him ‘ Bony,’ and do now, sometimes, but the name don’t fit him a bit, for he is just as fat as my grandpa’s little pink pigs. It was a year ago, about,” continued he,

“ we were all going up to grandpa’s on our vacation, that we met little ‘ Goldylocks,’ and I know this is a truly story. Now you see; please read more, Nursey Marvin, just till we see if that baby’s name isn’t Napoleon Bonaparte, just as I tell you.”

And Nurse Marvin felt, as she read on in the story book, and saw the truth of Jamie’s words, that possibly the little boy was right, and so the book had for them both a greater interest.

She closed it at the third chapter, however, for she feared to tax the strength of her patient, and soon the little fellow dozed off to sleep, and woke! — to find a fresh rose placed between his fingers! — and to find sitting by his bed-side the Queen Lady! and — could it be? — yes, it was — little ‘ Goldylocks,’ too! — for

Elsie Lovelace had begged to go with Mrs. Goodwin, to see the cot that bore the name in memory of her little sister Faith.

Her surprise was great, however, on entering the ward, as she saw between the pillows the pale face of her travelling companion of that summer day in June one year and more ago,—when she had journeyed alone to Hazelwood.

Jamie was sleeping when the visitors entered, and Elsie, as she looked upon the pale face of the sleeper, was impatient for him to wake.

She whispered to Mrs. Goodwin:

“I know him, fairy godmother. Why, it is Napoleon Bonaparte’s brother!” and Jamie awoke just in time to overhear, despite the whisper, the name of his little brother, and a look of glad surprise covered his wan features.

"I know you, don't I?" he asked, timidly, of Elsie.

Nurse Marvin interrupted, saying: "Are you the little girl Jamie has been talking about? He will insist that the story I have been reading him is a true one. Perhaps the child is right, after all."

"Oh, yes, ma'am," replied Elsie; "it was a year ago, about, when I went to Falcons-height that I first met Jamie on the train —

"How is the baby, Jamie?" she asked, turning to the sick boy.

"Oh, he's all well, or was, when I saw him last time; but that was a long while ago," replied Jamie. Then he asked, turning to Nurse Marvin,

"How long ago is it, nursey?"

Nurse Marvin then told to the visitors,

Jamie's story of his life at the hospital, not forgetting to add:

"Jamie is our pet; we all love him, he is so patient."

The visitors did not make a long stay, and Mrs. Goodwin, as she bade little Jamie "Good-by," said to him:

"You must get Nurse Marvin to write to me every week, and be sure to let me know when you leave here, won't you? I shall see Dr. —, and ask him to let you stay until you are quite strong again, and, sometime, perhaps, you will come to Falcons-height to see the home of little Miss Faith.

"Good-by, dear," and Mrs. Goodwin leaned over to kiss the face of the invalid, and Elsie and she left the room, with a good-by for all.

As they walked on their homeward way, Elsie said to her companion,

"Did you buy all those chairs and beds, and everything, godmother dear?"

"No," replied Mrs. Goodwin, "I did not select them, Elsie; is that what you mean, dear? Perhaps you do not like them, because they look so very plain. It is best that they should be so," replied Mrs. Goodwin.

"Oh, no, ma'am, I didn't mean just that," said Elsie.

"Do you mean, then, did I pay for them?" asked Mrs. Goodwin, who divined the cause of the child's modesty.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Elsie, adding, "Did Faith tell you to?"

"No, dear," said Mrs. Goodwin, "I have often felt it a useless outlay of money to put up elaborate monuments

to our loved ones' memory to crumble away with time, and as I knew that Faith was always in sympathy with the sick, I felt that she would be better pleased to have me make a home for sick children, and by a strange chance, the first occupant of the home in her memory, is little Jamie, whom an accident, will, I fear, render a cripple for life, as was my dear child. Let us hope not, however."

So chatting they reached Miss Green's home.

Each week of Jamie's stay in the hospital, a box of flowers was brought to him, and the card attached told him that the "Queen Lady" was thinking of him, and hoping for his recovery. Jamie was always generous with his pretty flowers, and gladdened many a sick child's heart.

Having read about the sentiment of the

stars in the little book, Jamie always insisted in naming one for the “Queen Lady’s little girl:”

“For,” he said to Nurse Marvin, “I am sure if little Faith can, she will like to watch over this home of hers, and sick me.”

## CHAPTER VII

“ OME again! yes, home again!” said the trio of travellers as they neared the station of Hazelwood, on their homeward journey from the city.

“ Oh, I am so glad, to get back home again! are you mamma?” asked Elsie, whose eyes were lighted with the true joy of childish pleasure. “ I am so glad! so glad, mamma, to get back home again!”

“ And why are you so glad, little daughter?” asked Mrs. Lovelace.

“ Oh, I don’t just know. Yes, I do, too, mamma,” said Elsie. “ Somehow the

city is so noisy it tires me, and the people—they don’t seem to care anything about you. They ask who your father and your grandfather were. It’s all very well, mamma, for those like you and me who know. I am afraid I was almost a naughty girl the other day, and not quite polite, for I had to try very hard to keep from laughing right in her face, when Miss Green’s English friend said to me,

“‘Little girl, your name is Lovelace, is it? It sounds like an English name. Are you proud enough of it, I wonder?’

“I told her I thought it was rather a pretty name, anyway, and that my papa and my mamma were both English. Then she said to me,

“‘Oh, England, don’t you know, is a noble birthright to claim,’ and then she said to Miss Green,

“‘Just fancy, Miss Green, of this little English girl being contented to call herself an American!’”

“What am I, anyway, blessed mamma?” asked Elsie.

“You are my little daughter, and isn’t that enough, dearie?” said her mother, in a very endearing tone.

“Oh, yes, that is enough for me to know, blessed mamma, of course, but when such a person as Miss Green’s English friend asks me like that again, what shall I say then?” said the child.

“Say,” replied Mrs. Lovelace, thoughtfully, as if weighing carefully her words, “say that you are English by birth, but American in thought, since you must always remember with pride your English ancestors, and in your life in this, our

adopted country of America, try to live up to their noble example."

"Well, who were they, mamma," my ancestors? as you call them," asked Elsie, to whom her mother quickly responded,

"Good and noble men and women, men of honor and intelligence, and women of Christian faith and refinement. Is not that enough to know of them, little daughter?"

When the journey came to an end, the party alighted from the train, and by the carriage that stood in waiting, they were glad to see Judge Goodwin. His greeting was:

"Well, wife, it has been the longest week that I ever knew, and I am glad enough that you are all home again."

"So are we, godfather dear," said Elsie, as the tall form of the Judge bent

and he kissed her upturned face. "So are we, too," and Elsie echoed the sentiment of the home-coming party, for Mrs. Goodwin, as she seated herself in the carriage, said, turning to Elsie,

"I think I like green trees better than brick walls. Don't you, little girl?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Elsie, "and I pity those children who can't pick all the pretty flowers that I can."

"Well," said the Judge, "I may stand all alone in my opinion, as judges often have to do, but I think the city is a pretty good place to live in at times, say in the winter, for instance, when the snow-drifts make a little too close acquaintance with your windows and doorway. Then, too, we miss here in our quiet life in the country, all the pleasant lectures and concerts, and the like. However, we can

make ourselves useful anywhere, and so, let me prove my usefulness by helping you all out of the carriage, for here we are at Falcons-height. Yes, here we are at home! Yes, at home! The old song has it about right, ‘There *is* no place like home.’ ”

And the home life was again taken up by the travellers, whose little journey soon became but a memory.

News from the city was eagerly looked forward to by Elsie and her mother, and in time, the proofs of their pictures were duly received.

As Elsie opened them in the broad sunlight of the window, they slowly changed color to Elsie’s dismay.

Mrs. Lovelace cautioned her not to expose them to the light. “For,” she said, “they are like some people who are



UNCLE JACK IN LONDON. — *Page 109.*



manny is it ye're going to make, Miss Elsie? Tin, d' ye say? Shure ye'll be a wake darlint, by that toime, so I'll just stan' by ye.”

And with her arms a-kimbo, she stood by the side of Elsie. The latter was not to be frightened by such a trifle as the making of ten pies seemed to her, although many an experienced cook like Bridget, would have called it quite an undertaking.

She stood before the table on which rested the things that Bridget had prepared for her, and really looked very knowing when she put a bit of butter upon half of the plates and rubbed it over their shining surface.

Then she commenced to vigorously roll out the pastry, that Bridget had already prepared.

"Only a wee bit of the flour, miss," said Bridget; for Elsie was having such a struggle to keep the dough together, that she had resorted to a very free use of the dredging-box. "Ye'll have thim tough," she added.

"Oh, cook, how do you ever make such nice pies? Just see, I can't do anything with this dough; see how it sticks; what shall I do?" And Elsie's first attempt promised to be a failure. Bridget, however, came to the rescue, and with a few deft uses of her brawny hands, the torture was over for a time.

"And is it that ye wants me to help ye, miss, or to make thim for ye?" she asked, in an interested way.

"Oh, no, cook, thank you; just help me a little now and then, like that, and I know I can learn, and I am sure my



Bertha G. Davidson  
1895.

"THE PIES WERE MADE AND BAKED." — *Page 127.*



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“Ye made him!” repeated Bridget. “Will noo, I loikes that, shure. Did ye’s ever hear the loikes o’ that? Ye made him! Shure, haven’t I wor-r-r-ked and wor-r-r-ked over that kittle of mince, and tasted it, till I don’t know the difference betwane nootmegs and clooves, ’cept the clooves bites me tongue longer an’ a while. I loike that, miss.” But, Bridget’s voice changed to one of tenderness as she added, “But I’ll tache ye, because I thinks that iver-r-y yooung laddy should learn how to cook, and who knows but ye might go to London and lave me — some day.”

So with Bridget’s help, the pies were made and baked. Each had a letter on

its top, traced with a fancy cutter carved out of ivory, and, as Bridget so truly said, as she passed the clumsy kitchen utensil into the little hands, hardly large enough to clasp it, it was “the ginooine tooth of the animil that was such an inimy of Jonah’s.”

Thus ended Elsie’s first cooking lesson, which she was only too glad to have finished, and, too, be it said, her teacher was equally glad, for the latter said, as she looked at the flour scattered all about the floor:

“ Thim’s the car-*pin*-ter’s chips, they tells about; but they mane waste, shure, as will as wor-r-k.”

The afternoon had been set aside for the delivery of the little pies.

“ Come,” said Mrs. Goodwin, after dinner,

"Come, Elsie, we must make an early start for our calls, the days are getting so short, you know. So the carriage will be ready at half-past two. Get your goodies together, dear."

Bridget, whose interest in the little Charity School children had commenced with the years of her young mistress Faith, and increased with the busy hour spent for them with Elsie, had the basket waiting for the latter, and, at the appointed hour, Mrs. Goodwin and Elsie started on their charity calls, and ten young hearts were gladdened by the decorated pastry, which, for their own good, be it said, was a stranger to their daily life and digestion.

On the return drive, Mrs. Goodwin and Elsie stopped at the village post-office, and the latter did not have to puzzle long over the address of the crumpled-looking

note the postmaster passed into her hand.  
It read —

Mrs. Queen Lady Goodwin,  
Falcons-height,  
Hazelwood.

“ Oh, from Jamie, isn’t it, godmother? ” said Elsie, as the latter read aloud the queer address.

“ We will read and see, ” replied Mrs. Goodwin.

Opening the letter, she read, —

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With lots of love,  
JAMIE.

The letter bore many corrections, as if some older person had overlooked it, but the English could have but one meaning.

Jamie was longing for another sight of the “Queen Lady!”

Mrs. Goodwin, as she read the letter, could not but smile at the boy’s candor, and said to Elsie:

“The little fellow is right. I did tell him I should like to have him come to our home—to Faith’s home—and I must keep my promise and arrange a visit for Jamie. Promises, Elsie, should, of course, always be kept, but special pains taken to redeem promptly, those made to sick people and children, and so little Jamie has two strong claims upon me, Elsie, and I must see that he is on his way to Hazelwood before long.”

“Here we are at home, now, little girl.

And see, it looks in the sky as if snow would be here before morning.”

“And,” said Elsie, “before Mr. Oldrive gets here too. You remember that he said, godmother, he hoped to be here before the first snow-fall,” and disappointment was manifest in her words.

“Yes,” replied Mrs. Goodwin, “he did hope to do so, I know, but Mrs. Oldrive told me yesterday, that he wrote her last week, that he should be delayed in London by important business, which he felt would so interest Hazelwood people that they would forgive him for breaking his promise, and so, little girl, we must have patience.”

“Well, godmother dear,” replied the child, “I shall save my Thanksgiving wish-bone to break with him when he does come back, and wish”—

"Wish what, dear?" asked Mrs. Goodwin.

"Wish for news from my Uncle Jack! Do you believe that Mr. Oldrive will bring Uncle Jack back to Hazelwood with him, godmother?" asked Elsie.

"Hardly, my dear," replied Mrs. Goodwin, "for your uncle is such an invalid, Mr. Oldrive writes, it would not be wise to attempt such a long journey, but perhaps you can go to him, go to London, Elsie."

"London!" repeated Elsie, excitedly, "London! yes, I would like to go, if I could take mamma, and you, and godfather, and Topaz, and the stars!"

"Well," replied Mrs. Goodwin, "you can have the stars for company, at least."

As the carriage rolled up the driveway, in the darkness, Rachel's quick ear detected the sound, and with her old-time

faithfulness stood ready to open the door for the home-comers.

"Oh, missus," she said in greeting, "I'se mighty glad you'se here, and you, too, Miss Elsie. It's been lonesome like to-day, I reck'n, 'cause to-morrow is Thanksgiving, and my heart's over thar'."

She hesitated. All knew her meaning, as her big black hand pointed in the direction of the little church yard of St. John's.

. . . . .

Christmas was nearing!

For weeks, in every household, mysterious treasures had been hidden away in upper drawers, locked away in trunks and closets, till old and young had been alike mystified.

Falcons-height, whose doors had been closed to social joys for a twelvemonth

and more, was again to offer its hospitality.

“ For,” said its mistress, as she gave her invitations to the villagers,

“ The Christmas-time seems the most fitting time to meet with you all again, under the roof of Falcons-height, when the Christmas star of peace and good-will, shines so brightly, and the great love of a little Child, makes us one together, all as children. So, come to us on Christmas-day, and we will live the life of peace and good-will.”

Busy hands had helped to decorate the great rooms of Falcons-height ! Busy fingers had twined yards upon yards of Christmas green around the balusters and chandeliers !

Pine boughs, with the winter’s frost, as if like kisses of the wood nymphs, had

been tossed into the great open fire-places, ready for lighting on the morrow !

But the Christmas-tree ! A perfect giant of the forest ! It stood in one corner of the wide hall, decorated with yards and yards of popcorn, that the younger children had strung, while the sound of the popping of more corn heard from the sitting-room, told that the work of trimming was only begun.

Hanging from the branches of the tree, were baubles and toys of vari-colored tinsel, and candles, hanging all about it, told of the illumination that would be on the morrow.

“ For,” said Judge Goodwin to a little fellow who begged to see the candles lighted — “ right away now,” — “ We must have our lights trimmed and burning, when Santa Claus comes to us to-morrow.”

The tree itself stood in a mound of white cotton wool, looking quite as if the snow had been brought with it from its winter home in the woods, and little spangles shone like Jack Frost's eyes everywhere over it.

When Rachel saw the tree standing in its Christmas dress, her approval was roughly expressed in her words to Elsie:

“ Well, miss, if that done don' look like a sure 'nough tree, grown like down in the woods o' Georgia, and that thar' star at the top o' it, is jes' as she 'd have it, for certain.”

Yes, there at the top was the Christmas star, in all its brilliancy of gilded gorgeousness and paper !

Little boxes of candy tied with pretty ribbons, caught the eyes of the little workers, and gayly colored cornucopias

hung in close touch to little fingers; but all were so eager to have the tree a "sure 'nough Christmas-tree," that no one thought of disturbing it, or its decorations, and all were quite willing to wait for Santa Claus' permission to undo them.

Into many a Christmas-eve dream, shone the Christmas star, and the fancied jingle of Santa Claus' sleigh bells, called many young Christmas sleepers to wake early with the greeting —

"Merry Christmas to you!"

## CHAPTER IX



ING, ring, ye bells of the morn-  
ing,  
Ring out the jubilee !  
Proclaim the beautiful story  
Of Christ's humanity.  
Sing, sing, all ye happy children,  
That song the angels led :  
“ Glory to God in the highest,”  
Come to the Christchild's bed ! \*

So sang the merry voices of the children, as they gathered about the Christmas-tree, at Falcons-height, on the afternoon of Christmas-day.

Snow had commenced to fall during the night, and many a little girl and boy

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\* Christmas Carol, published by the O. Ditson Co.,  
Boston.

who still believed in a real Santa Claus, (blessed belief of earliest childhood ! You, who know him well, leave it yet longer to your wee little brothers and sisters,—that thought which gave to your own earliest child life the tenderest memories of Christmas, that delight of thinking of Santa Claus as a mysterious but loving friend without any other known name!) had watched the falling flakes, and like little Milly Morris, as she pressed her face against the frosty window pane, expressed the hope that Santa wouldn’t “be buried in the snow and be a great big snow-man ! ”

In many places the snow had drifted high, and the trees stood like “cotton wool trees,” so again said little Millie, as she peeped out of the window, once more, in the early Christmas morning,

manny is it ye're going to make, Miss Elsie? Tin, d' ye say? Shure ye'll be a wake darlint, by that toime, so I'll just stan' by ye.”

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“Here we are at home, now, little girl.

who still believed in a real Santa Claus, (blessed belief of earliest childhood ! You, who know him well, leave it yet longer to your wee little brothers and sisters,—that thought which gave to your own earliest child life the tenderest memories of Christmas, that delight of thinking of Santa Claus as a mysterious but loving friend without any other known name!) had watched the falling flakes, and like little Milly Morris, as she pressed her face against the frosty window pane, expressed the hope that Santa wouldn’t “be buried in the snow and be a great big snow-man !”

In many places the snow had drifted high, and the trees stood like “cotton wool trees,” so again said little Millie, as she peeped out of the window, once more, in the early Christmas morning,

manny is it ye're going to make, Miss Elsie? Tin, d' ye say? Shure ye'll be a wake darlint, by that toime, so I'll just stan' by ye.”

And with her arms a-kimbo, she stood by the side of Elsie. The latter was not to be frightened by such a trifle as the making of ten pies seemed to her, although many an experienced cook like Bridget, would have called it quite an undertaking.

She stood before the table on which rested the things that Bridget had prepared for her, and really looked very knowing when she put a bit of butter upon half of the plates and rubbed it over their shining surface.

Then she commenced to vigorously roll out the pastry, that Bridget had already prepared.

“Only a wee bit of the flour, miss,” said Bridget; for Elsie was having such a struggle to keep the dough together, that she had resorted to a very free use of the dredging-box. “Ye’ll have thim tough,” she added.

“Oh, cook, how do you ever make such nice pies? Just see, I can’t do anything with this dough; see how it sticks; what shall I do?” And Elsie’s first attempt promised to be a failure. Bridget, however, came to the rescue, and with a few deft uses of her brawny hands, the torture was over for a time.

“And is it that ye wants me to help ye, miss, or to make thim for ye?” she asked, in an interested way.

“Oh, no, cook, thank you; just help me a little now and then, like that, and I know I can learn, and I am sure my



Bertha G. Davidson  
1895.

“THE PIES WERE MADE AND BAKED.” — *Page 127.*



little friends in the Charity School, will so like to know that I made these pretty pies for them,” said Elsie.

“Ye made thim!” repeated Bridget. “Will noo, I loikes that, shure. Did ye’s ever hear the loikes o’ that? Ye made thim! Shure, haven’t I wor-r-r-ked and wor-r-r-ked over that kittle of mince, and tasted it, till I don’t know the difference betwane nootmegs and clooves, ’cept the clooves bites me tongue longer an’ a while. I loike that, miss.” But, Bridget’s voice changed to one of tenderness as she added, “But I’ll tache ye, because I thinks that iver-r-y yooung laddy should learn how to cook, and who knows but ye might go to London and lave me—some day.”

So with Bridget’s help, the pies were made and baked. Each had a letter on

its top, traced with a fancy cutter carved out of ivory, and, as Bridget so truly said, as she passed the clumsy kitchen utensil into the little hands, hardly large enough to clasp it, it was “the ginooine tooth of the animil that was such an inimy of Jonah’s.”

Thus ended Elsie’s first cooking lesson, which she was only too glad to have finished, and, too, be it said, her teacher was equally glad, for the latter said, as she looked at the flour scattered all about the floor:

“ Thim’s the car-*pin*-ter’s chips, they tells about; but they mane waste, shure, as will as wor-r-k.”

The afternoon had been set aside for the delivery of the little pies.

“ Come,” said Mrs. Goodwin, after dinner,

"Come, Elsie, we must make an early start for our calls, the days are getting so short, you know. So the carriage will be ready at half-past two. Get your goodies together, dear."

Bridget, whose interest in the little Charity School children had commenced with the years of her young mistress Faith, and increased with the busy hour spent for them with Elsie, had the basket waiting for the latter, and, at the appointed hour, Mrs. Goodwin and Elsie started on their charity calls, and ten young hearts were gladdened by the decorated pastry, which, for their own good, be it said, was a stranger to their daily life and digestion.

On the return drive, Mrs. Goodwin and Elsie stopped at the village post-office, and the latter did not have to puzzle long over the address of the crumpled-looking

note the postmaster passed into her hand.  
It read —

Mrs. Queen Lady Goodwin,  
Falcons-height,  
Hazelwood.

"Oh, from Jamie, isn't it, godmother?" said Elsie, as the latter read aloud the queer address.

"We will read and see," replied Mrs. Goodwin.

Opening the letter, she read, —

MY DEAR MRS. QUEEN LADY, — It seems so long since I saw you. I wish I could come to see you. You said I could sometime. I can come any time you want me to. I've saved my pennies to buy my ticket, and I guess I can find the way. Answer soon.

With lots of love,  
JAMIE.

The letter bore many corrections, as if some older person had overlooked it, but the English could have but one meaning.

Jamie was longing for another sight of the “Queen Lady!”

Mrs. Goodwin, as she read the letter, could not but smile at the boy’s candor, and said to Elsie:

“The little fellow is right. I did tell him I should like to have him come to our home—to Faith’s home—and I must keep my promise and arrange a visit for Jamie. Promises, Elsie, should, of course, always be kept, but special pains taken to redeem promptly, those made to sick people and children, and so little Jamie has two strong claims upon me, Elsie, and I must see that he is on his way to Hazelwood before long.”

“Here we are at home, now, little girl.

And see, it looks in the sky as if snow would be here before morning."

"And," said Elsie, "before Mr. Oldrive gets here too. You remember that he said, godmother, he hoped to be here before the first snow-fall," and disappointment was manifest in her words.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Goodwin, "he did hope to do so, I know, but Mrs. Oldrive told me yesterday, that he wrote her last week, that he should be delayed in London by important business, which he felt would so interest Hazelwood people that they would forgive him for breaking his promise, and so, little girl, we must have patience."

"Well, godmother dear," replied the child, "I shall save my Thanksgiving wish-bone to break with him when he does come back, and wish"—

“Wish what, dear?” asked Mrs. Goodwin.

“Wish for news from my Uncle Jack! Do you believe that Mr. Oldrive will bring Uncle Jack back to Hazelwood with him, godmother?” asked Elsie.

“Hardly, my dear,” replied Mrs. Goodwin, “for your uncle is such an invalid, Mr. Oldrive writes, it would not be wise to attempt such a long journey, but perhaps you can go to him, go to London, Elsie.”

“London!” repeated Elsie, excitedly, “London! yes, I would like to go, if I could take mamma, and you, and godfather, and Topaz, and the stars!”

“Well,” replied Mrs. Goodwin, “you can have the stars for company, at least.”

As the carriage rolled up the driveway, in the darkness, Rachel’s quick ear detected the sound, and with her old-time

faithfulness stood ready to open the door for the home-comers.

"Oh, missus," she said in greeting, "I'se mighty glad you'se here, and you, too, Miss Elsie. It's been lonesome like to-day, I reck'n, 'cause to-morrow is Thanksgiving, and my heart's over thar'."

She hesitated. All knew her meaning, as her big black hand pointed in the direction of the little church yard of St. John's.

. . . . .

Christmas was nearing!

For weeks, in every household, mysterious treasures had been hidden away in upper drawers, locked away in trunks and closets, till old and young had been alike mystified.

Falcons-height, whose doors had been closed to social joys for a twelvemonth

and more, was again to offer its hospitality.

“ For,” said its mistress, as she gave her invitations to the villagers,

“ The Christmas-time seems the most fitting time to meet with you all again, under the roof of Falcons-height, when the Christmas star of peace and good-will, shines so brightly, and the great love of a little Child, makes us one together, all as children. So, come to us on Christmas-day, and we will live the life of peace and good-will.”

Busy hands had helped to decorate the great rooms of Falcons-height ! Busy fingers had twined yards upon yards of Christmas green around the balusters and chandeliers !

Pine boughs, with the winter’s frost, as if like kisses of the wood nymphs, had

been tossed into the great open fire-places, ready for lighting on the morrow !

But the Christmas-tree ! A perfect giant of the forest ! It stood in one corner of the wide hall, decorated with yards and yards of popcorn, that the younger children had strung, while the sound of the popping of more corn heard from the sitting-room, told that the work of trimming was only begun.

Hanging from the branches of the tree, were baubles and toys of vari-colored tinsel, and candles, hanging all about it, told of the illumination that would be on the morrow.

“ For,” said Judge Goodwin to a little fellow who begged to see the candles lighted — “ right away now,” — “ We must have our lights trimmed and burning, when Santa Claus comes to us to-morrow.”

The tree itself stood in a mound of white cotton wool, looking quite as if the snow had been brought with it from its winter home in the woods, and little spangles shone like Jack Frost's eyes everywhere over it.

When Rachel saw the tree standing in its Christmas dress, her approval was roughly expressed in her words to Elsie:

"Well, miss, if that done don' look like a sure 'nough tree, grown like down in the woods o' Georgia, and that thar' star at the top o' it, is jes' as she 'd have it, for certain."

Yes, there at the top was the Christmas star, in all its brilliancy of gilded gorgeousness and paper!

Little boxes of candy tied with pretty ribbons, caught the eyes of the little workers, and gayly colored cornucopias

hung in close touch to little fingers; but all were so eager to have the tree a “sure 'nough Christmas-tree,” that no one thought of disturbing it, or its decorations, and all were quite willing to wait for Santa Claus' permission to undo them.

Into many a Christmas-eve dream, shone the Christmas star, and the fancied jingle of Santa Claus' sleigh bells, called many young Christmas sleepers to wake early with the greeting—

“ Merry Christmas to you ! ”

## CHAPTER IX



ING, ring, ye bells of the morn-  
ing,  
Ring out the jubilee !  
Proclaim the beautiful story  
Of Christ's humanity.  
Sing, sing, all ye happy children,  
That song the angels led :  
“ Glory to God in the highest,”  
Come to the Christchild's bed ! \*

So sang the merry voices of the children, as they gathered about the Christmas-tree, at Falcons-height, on the afternoon of Christmas-day.

Snow had commenced to fall during the night, and many a little girl and boy

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\* Christmas Carol, published by the O. Ditson Co.,  
Boston.

who still believed in a real Santa Claus, (blessed belief of earliest childhood ! You, who know him well, leave it yet longer to your wee little brothers and sisters,—that thought which gave to your own earliest child life the tenderest memories of Christmas, that delight of thinking of Santa Claus as a mysterious but loving friend without any other known name!) had watched the falling flakes, and like little Milly Morris, as she pressed her face against the frosty window pane, expressed the hope that Santa wouldn’t “ be buried in the snow and be a great big snow-man ! ”

In many places the snow had drifted high, and the trees stood like “ cotton wool trees,” so again said little Millie, as she peeped out of the window, once more, in the early Christmas morning,

wondering if Santa Claus would remember her "teenty-tointy baby bruvver."

She said to her mamma, "I didn't wite to Santa K'aus, mamma, 'cause Elsie said she 'oold tell him.

"Do 'oo b'lieve she 'ill, mamma dear?"

And Mrs. Lovelace, who had been taken into Elsie's confidence, and knew that she had not forgotten her promise made that summer day in the woods, comforted her little girl with the reply,

"I think she will, Milly. We will wait and see, anyway."

Loud, hosannas we'll sing  
To Messiah our King !  
With peace and good-will towards all,  
For us, is the story,  
To Him, be the glory,  
Hosanna ! hosanna ! our King !

So sang the happy children, and good-

will reigned everywhere. The house was literally filled with young life.

Bessie Barrett, Margaret and Mary Oldrive, Rose Osgood, the Lawrence twin sisters, were all there.

But look! who is that little girl sitting so demurely in Grandpa Stimpson's lap?

Little Milly Morris, to be sure! for little Milly, although wanting to go to “the Tris'mas,” as she termed it, would not budge an inch, without her ever constant companion, her dear old grandfather, who would have braved every snow-drift in Hazelwood to please his little granddaughter.

There she sat! one hand hugging tight around Grandpa Stimpson's neck, and the other had all it could do, to hold the big, big doll that came to her that morning, “From an unknown friend.”



"LITTLE MILLY MORRIS, TO BE SURE!" — *Page 142.*



### And the boys!

Ned Ashton, who was the eldest one present, seemed to feel that he ought to set an example, and so let his natural politeness show itself to all the younger people.

Milly was the only little lady that refused to know him. She even looked askance at his candy bribes, until grandpa would first take them and put them in her lap.

Ray Hunt, and Cecil Heywood, and Harry Bates, were all gathered in friendly chattering with a little boy. Surely we have seen him before ! too lame, yet, to run about much, as his crutches that leaned against his chair but too plainly told.

Little Jamie ! Yes, little Jamie Armitage ! who had been looking forward to

this merry day, if the truth were told, since that November day, on which he sent his childish note to “Mrs. Queen Lady Goodwin.”

His pleasure was complete when he received a reply from Mrs. Goodwin, asking him to be one of her guests.

Everything had been arranged for his comfort, by the Lady Bountiful, and when he arrived, the day before, driven up from the station by James, he, too, like Elsie Lovelace on the day of her introduction to Hazelwood, felt himself in fairyland.

The children having sung their merry carols, now waited for the coming of Santa Claus.

The tree stood in all its resplendent glory of candles, toys, and gilded baubles!

Little fingers that had until now, resisted all temptation, were just burning

with impatience to untie the bundles tha  
Milly had been made to believe Santa  
Claus had "sent in his trunk that had  
come the day before."

Her innocent question—

"Did he send the key, too?" was for a  
time a puzzler to her elders to answer.

Sleigh bells were heard! The clear,  
frosty air echoed the silvery and welcome  
sound! and although the curtains were  
drawn closely, one or more of the chil-  
dren, who could not curb their curiosity—  
peeped out and saw Santa Claus!

Yes, Santa Claus! alighting from his  
sleigh, outside the door! His great fur  
coat was undeniably covered with snow,  
and his beard was decorated with Na-  
ture's genuine frost! Heavy white eye-  
brows hid his eyes, almost, while his  
great fur cap, with its ear laps, was pulled

down over his ears, so far, that the “peeping Toms” at the window, wondered who he was. When he emerged later from the mock chimneyway, with his pack upon his back, and his great fur mittens, his disguise was too difficult to penetrate.

There he stood ! but not a word did he speak ! for Judge Goodwin announced to the company assembled,

That as he “could not himself grow a beard quite long enough at such short notice, he had invited a friend to be his substitute.”

“I thought,” continued Judge Goodwin, “that it would make additional merriment for you all, to guess his name. He will not speak to you, because voices are too often telltales, you know, but he will pass his gifts to Ned Ashton, who

will read aloud the address upon the wrapper, and Ned will in turn pass them to each one of you.

"Then," he continued, "whoever guesses Santa Claus' right name, shall have the privilege of taking off his disguise and introducing him to the company."

"Come, dear Santa Claus, we are glad indeed to see you here to-day," and Judge Goodwin's words were so full of emphasis and expression, that the children wondered if he really might not be their friend as well as his, or —

Was he a dummy? — jointed? that he so very systematically passed down his bundles to Ned Ashton, who announced in a loud voice,

"Little Milly Morris' teenty-tointy baby brother," and Milly forgot for the moment her bashfulness, and clambered down

from Grandpa Stimpson's knee, and ran for the package, looking very like a woolly lamb.

“Wait a minute, Milly,” said Ned, as he read aloud — “Milly Morris.”

Yes, and yet another and another! until Grandpa Stimpson, seeing that his little charge would be over-burdened, came to her side, while Milly's face was radiant with the Christmas joy.

“Harry Bates!” called Ned Ashton, and a package looking suspiciously like a sled was passed into Harry's outstretched hands.

“Rose Osgood!” and Rose stepped up to claim what was unmistakably a doll, for the wrapper had become loosened, and the bronze slippers of the little French maiden crept out to tell her own story.

“ Margaret Oldrive ! ”

“ Mary Oldrive ! ” Ned again read, and the two sisters went hand in hand to receive their presents.

Some one asked Santa Claus, if he was not warm in his fur coat and cap, hoping to hear his voice in answer, but Santa was too smart to be trapped, and nodded his head in the affirmative, while the melting frost on his beard, and the snow-flakes melted away into nothingness, and showed what the heat had done, and that the old man really was warm.

All the gifts had been distributed. The pack was empty. Only the gilded balls and the popcorn decorations were loyal to the Christmas-tree, and stayed upon it, as if to protect its remaining glory.

The candles were burning low, and the

darkness outside warned the guardians of the very youngest children of the party, that bed-time would overtake them before they arrived back in the village, and so they were taken home before the secret of Santa Claus was told.

“ Just as well,” said Mrs. Goodwin, as she watched the children out of sight.

“ Let them think of him as their chimney friend a few years longer.”

Meantime the guessing had commenced — and such guesses !

“ Dummy ” seemed to be the most popular one, and honors were divided between “ Dummy,” and “ Farmer Allen,” and “ Simple Simon.”

At last it came Elsie’s turn to guess. She walked up and taking Santa’s benumbed hand in her own, she held it a while as if in search of something.

Ah, she has it !

What is it ?

Only Judge Goodwin was allowed to know her secret, as Elsie whispered in his ear the name, and the Judge himself, seemingly as excited as the children, announced that Elsie would soon introduce the stranger, and Elsie led the latter from the room.

In passing, Santa Claus wished the company a " Merry Christmas ! " but in such a gruff tone that no one was helped by the voice, and all waited eagerly for the secret and the introduction.

They did not have to wait long, for it took but a short time to throw off cap, mittens, false eyebrows, and beard, and the fur coat was gladly laid aside by its owner, who entered the parlor hand in

hand with Elsie, and she announced to the surprised audience,—

"Rev. Mr. Oldrive!"

Yes, there he stood, bronzed with travel!

Rev. Mr. Oldrive, so dear to Hazelwood hearts! Long waited for and now he stood before them!

For a long time it seemed as if he would be literally suffocated with the great love of the children, as they shook his hands and kissed his cheeks, while one little fellow, more nimble than the rest, overcome with the excitement of the hour, actually climbed up on Mr. Oldrive's back, and was forgiven the great familiarity because of the spirit that prompted it.

The excitement was intense! Mr. Oldrive here! Mr. Oldrive back from

his long journey ! “But how and when did he get here?” asked the surprised children, and Judge Goodwin suggested that Mr. Oldrive, himself, answer the questions of the little people, and in an off-hand speech, the good clergyman said:

“My dear young friends, yes, and old ones, too,” he added, “my dear friends, all, I can hardly believe that I am here, singing ‘that glorious song of old’ with you. For days I have wished it. At night, when I would lie down in my stateroom, I have wished that I might literally put my shoulder to the wheel, and make the great steamer plod faster over the ocean. And—here I am ! God be praised that I can join my voice with yours,

And tell in glorious triumph  
The News from Galilee !

where I have really been since I last saw you all.

"Now, how did I steal into this quiet little village without your knowing it? you ask, I suppose.

"I confess that I never expected that I could, but when I landed in the city, I found that I could catch a train that would stop at the junction twenty miles away, and so, I took it, and arrived there just before midnight.

"There I hired a man, who did not know me, to bring me over in his sleigh, (and he did have such a fast horse!). We arrived home just before daybreak.

"Judge Goodwin was an early caller upon me, or rather at my house, and it was he that suggested this little innocent ruse. My wife and children promised, (and kept !) secrecy. I can tell you the

day has been a long one, for I have not even been allowed to sit at my window, nor, indeed, speak hardly above a whisper, for fear that some one might see or hear me.

“And now,” concluded Mr. Oldrive, “I can look at you all, dear children. I can look into your smiling faces, and say to you how happy I am to be with you, this merry Christmas-day — this children’s day of the year !”

The children, at the close of Mr. Oldrive’s greeting, joined as with one voice in saying,

“Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!  
Welcome home! welcome home!”

So ended the Christmas festivities at Falcons-height, and the party broke up wishing one another a

“Merry Christmas!”

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“Merry Christmas!”

"Mr. Oldrive," said Elsie, going up to the beloved clergyman as he stood bidding good-by to his friends,

"Mr. Oldrive, did you bring me any message from my Uncle Jack?"

"Yes, Elsie, dear," replied Mr. Oldrive, "I did; but it is one that must wait until to-morrow, for it is too much a mixture of sadness and joy, to be delivered until the Christmas star of happiness and peace is set. I am coming to Falcons-height to-morrow morning early, and so good-night, little girl, sleep well, and wait until I see you again to-morrow. Wait patiently, won't you? Good-night."

And Mr. Oldrive was gone, with the jingling of the sleigh bells, that told of the going out of Santa Claus until another year should welcome him!

## CHAPTER X



ADNESS and joy!

Well was it, that Elsie Lovelace did not fully understand the meaning of Mr. Oldrive's parting words !

Well was it, that her young heart was so full of the glories of Christmas, that she did not know all that was in store for her coming days!

Changes had come early in life to her, and her present happiness seemed to her, as to her good mother at times, as almost too good to be true, for the memories of her little foster-sister, alone, marred the happiness of the past !

Her father had died when she was but a tiny child, and although she had been always taught by her mother to reverence his memory, yet she could hardly be said to remember him, or to really know her loss.

Her life in the great city in her humble home, had many cares now unknown to her, and her great love for her “blessed mamma” had always brought brightness to her days of childhood.

So she did not attempt to solve the meaning of Mr. Oldrive’s words; — sadness and joy! except to express just once, after he left, curiosity about her Uncle Jack’s message.

“I wonder, mamma, what message Uncle Jack has sent me? I wonder why Mr. Oldrive did not tell me to-night?” she asked her mother, and Mrs. Love-

lace, whose older judgment thought surely some good reason held the message back, wondered, be it said, not a little, too.

Sadness and joy! Alas, she had known too well the story of sadness, and the joy of the present life made her to wish to guard it from any intrusion, and so, as she wondered, she felt the strangeness of the parting words, and she, too, waited for the morrow with eagerness, and not a little anxiety, for something,—that might make greater her present happiness,—or perhaps mar it!

When the family assembled at the breakfast-table the next morning, the Christmas joy was still in their hearts, and little Jamie hugged closely to his side his toys and books, for he had been allowed “just this once,” to bring them to the dining-room.

Poor little Jamie! It seemed to all that Jamie ought to have every pleasure brought to him, because he was, as yet, unable to go about much, and seek his own enjoyment. He was the picture of happiness, and only the awkward-looking crutches by his side, betrayed the sad chapter in his short story of life.

“My Queen Lady” he always called Mrs. Goodwin when speaking of her, and no one corrected him, for when speaking to her, he addressed her as to-day, “Mrs. Queen Lady,” saying,

“Mrs. Queen Lady, how long do you want me to stay with you?”

“How long?” repeated Mrs. Goodwin, inquiringly; “how long, Jamie? Why, just as long as you are contented, dear. Why do you ask, my dear boy?”

“Well,” replied Jamie, “because my

mother told me not to stay any longer than you wanted me to, and not to stay at all unless you urged me to. Have you urged me to stay, Mrs. Queen Lady?"

How like a child! with the real innocence of childhood! And a smile went over the faces of the elder people at the table.

"Well, my dear Jamie," said Mrs. Goodwin, "if really wishing you to stay with us longer is urging, then I urge you to remain as long as you will, for I really think the change will be of great good to you, and I will write your mother to-day and tell her so."

"Thank you, ma'am," said Jamie, to whom the happy prospect of a longer stay at Falcons-height seemed to bring an increased appetite, as he ordered his fifth griddle cake! while the sirup pitcher was

really in danger of being emptied in his generous hands.

The general subject of the breakfast-table was about the great surprise that had come to all in the person of their beloved rector, Mr. Oldrive.

“ Elsie,” said Judge Goodwin, “ how did you ever make such a good guess?”

Elsie replied,

“ Why, godfather dear, I don’t hardly know myself, unless it was that I was wishing for him all day. Then every one had guessed every one else, and as I sat thinking, I thought of that funny shaped ring that Mr. Oldrive always wears, and so I said to myself, if I can feel that ring, I’ll say ‘ Mr. Oldrive.’ ”

“ And that is why you seemed so very interested in Santa’s fur mittens, Elsie?” said Judge Goodwin.

"Yes, sir," replied Elsie, "and they were so thick I thought once that I would have to give it all up, and all of a sudden, the ring slipped right around his finger. I almost thought Mr. Oldrive made it slip. Well, you know, anyway, it did slip, and so I really can't say I felt the shape of it, but I felt a ring, anyway, and as there really was no one else in Hazelwood to guess about, why, I thought it might be Mr. Oldrive, and it was, and I was so glad, my heart felt queer."

"And we are all glad," replied the Judge; "but look! there is Mr. Oldrive, now alighting from his sleigh, as if to prove the truth of the time-worn words, 'Speak of angels, and you hear their wings.'"

"Good-morning, Mr. Oldrive," added

the judge as the open door revealed the former laying off his heavy fur coat in the hall. “Come in, and have a cup of coffee with us, won’t you? It will help to warm you up.”

“Yes, I will, thank you,” replied Mr. Oldrive, “but the welcome from you, and all the other good people of Hazelwood, since my return, ought to be warmth enough for one while. I am an early caller, judge, I know, and I shall have to make a long call as well. I am here by appointment with this little lady,” and he stepped behind Elsie’s chair and placed his hand as if in blessing upon her young head.

“I have a long story to tell, and most important messages to deliver,” he concluded.

“And are they in that green bag you

had with you?” asked Judge Goodwin, with a laugh.

“Yes,” replied Mr. Oldrive, “that is exactly where they are, and when breakfast is over, I want you and your good wife, and Elsie and her mother, to give me at least one good long hour, perhaps two, perhaps—well, perhaps a great many!”

“With pleasure,” replied the host, “all day, if you wish it.”

Breakfast being finished, all adjourned to the library, where a bright wood-fire, sparkling and crackling, seemed to add a welcome. Some way, as Elsie afterward said, “there seemed to be something queer in Mr. Oldrive’s manner as he commenced his story.”

“My good friends,” he said, “I am here as a messenger to-day,—a messen-

ger from old England, — a messenger from Elsie's Uncle Jack."

"Dear Uncle Jack!" interrupted Elsie, "how I wish I might see him! But I never have, you know, Mr. Oldrive, so mamma says. I wonder if I ever shall?"

"No, my little girl, not in this world; but I wish you might have seen him, Elsie, for he was equally anxious to meet his 'little American niece' — so he always called you. But, Elsie," added Mr. Oldrive in a subdued tone of manner and voice,

"No, you will never see him, now that he has finished his life of suffering and joined our little Faith."

"And I shan't ever see him, then?" said Elsie, with true sorrow showing in her young and pretty face.



A MESSENGER FROM UNCLE JACK. — Page 165.



Mrs. Lovelace, who had felt that something of the sort was to be the message of sadness that Mr. Oldrive had promised the night before to bring them with the morrow, said:

"And so we may never hope to see him again—Brother Jack!" And although Uncle Jack was the newly found, newly lost relation, the hearts of all were touched as Mr. Oldrive related his story.

"Yes," continued Mr. Oldrive, "I found Mr. Lovelace very shortly after I landed in England, living in one of London's most fashionable squares. I was ushered into his presence, a stranger, of course. I had written 'America' on my card, and as I entered the room where he sat, an invalid, he took me by the hand and said:

"'From America, I see by your card, sir.'

"I told him 'Yes,' and that I came from relatives of his in that country."

"'Relatives!' he repeated after me in a tone of irony. 'Relatives! Why, bless you, man, I haven't a relative in the world! I am all alone!'

"And I fancied, as he repeated the words, he was trying to appear indifferent, although I could plainly see the effort it cost him, for I studied closely the changing expressions that played over his pale face. 'But tell me, pray, sir,' he said, 'Who is there that cares enough for me to claim kinship with such a wreck as I am?'

"Oh, a little girl," I replied, "a little girl whose message to you is,—

"'Tell Uncle Jack that I love him,

and to be a good man, just as my papa was.’

“‘Uncle Jack! her papa!’ he repeated slowly, and in wonderment,— then continued,

“‘Why, my good man, I never had but one brother. His name was Edward, and I was away in Australia when he died. Indeed, no one knew of me for years, and it was just as well that they did not, too, I fancy, but tell me,

“‘Do you mean to say that Edward’s little baby girl is grown up and living in America? and sister Sarah? How strange!’

“Then he repeated most impressively Elsie’s message, and I thought I saw a new light in his face! A new expression came into his dull eyes as he said:

“‘Well, sir, you, perhaps, cannot under-

stand how a man feels that has thought himself literally all alone in the world, and then wakes to find a new claimant to his affections and his name. Of course, sir, I have plenty of friends, but to welcome to my heart one like the child you speak of, my favorite brother's child, it almost seems too unreal! And the man, so full of weakness and seeming worldliness, actually cried as if he were a child himself.

“I assured him that all I told him was true, and I also told him the story of Elsie and her mother in their home of to-day. He promised to write you that very day, Elsie,” said Mr. Oldrive, turning to the child.

“Oh, yes, sir,” said Elsie, “he did, and I had a great long letter from him, and I wrote him another one back, and I

sent our pictures, too—mamma's and mine!"

"Yes, dear, I saw them, Elsie, when I called a few weeks later," said Mr. Oldrive. "I say called, but I was, in truth, summoned by your Uncle Jack, who wrote me to come immediately, so I returned from the Irish lakes before I had really seen half their beauty.

"I found him very ill," continued the clergyman, "and I wish that I could tell you in exactly his own words, friends, his message to his little American niece. However, I give it as best I can.

"'Tell my little niece,' he said, 'she will never know how much good she has done. More good than forty sermons, sir,' then, recalling that I was a clergyman, he begged my pardon, and continued, saying, 'It was the little

kind word! Oh, sir,' and this I noted down to tell you all," said Mr. Oldrive, "because it was so true—

"‘Oh, sir,’ he said, ‘if only there were more kind words spoken, more kind deeds done for others, life would be sweeter in the living.’”

“Poor Uncle Jack!” said Elsie, who had listened with the rest very intently.

“No,” replied Mr. Oldrive, “say, rather, good Uncle Jack, for it was really your honest message, little one, as I bade you good-by on that mid-summer day, that helped to bring peace to those last days of your Uncle Jack.

“Here, Elsie,” concluded Mr. Oldrive, “here are some of the papers that he gave me that day for you.” And the clergyman drew from the green bag he brought with him a large bundle of

papers that bore a very legal air, with their high colored seals and red tape. “Here,” he said, “are some of the papers he wished me to take to his little niece in America.

“Here, Elsie, are Uncle Jack’s written messages to you, dear.

“Do you know what it all means?” asked Mr. Oldrive, as he passed the papers into Mrs. Lovelace’s hands.

“It means,” said Elsie, in a disappointed tone, “that now I shall never see my Uncle Jack. But what a lot of letters he sent me! Blessed mamma dear, will you please read them all to me?”

“Yes, she will, I know,” said Mr. Oldrive, “but, Elsie, it means, also, that you are the sole heiress to all his estate in England, and he was counted a very rich man, too.”

“Mr. Oldrive,” said Mrs. Lovelace, laying her hand gently on the good man’s arm,

“Do not, dear friend, tell her much, for Elsie could not understand if you did, and it is just as well that she cannot. Let her young heart be free from all pride, all vanity, and let her think only to-day of her loss, to-morrow of her gain—perhaps.”

“As you say,” replied Mr. Oldrive. “You are always right, Mrs. Lovelace, and I am only a blunt old man.”

“No, you are always our good friend,” said Mrs. Lovelace, “and I will not allow one word said against you.”

“Well, here are the papers! here they are! I arranged things as best I could, before leaving England, even to enlisting the sympathies of two spinster sisters in Sydenham, old friends of mine, with

whom you are to make your home when you first go to London; for much is waiting for you in London to do and claim.”

“In London!” cried all in unison.

“Yes, in London! Of course, you, Mrs. Lovelace, are made guardian of Elsie’s great property,” said Mr. Oldrive.

“But London is a long way off, isn’t it, Mr. Oldrive?” said Elsie, in a tone that told of loneliness, of separation from friends, and all that she and her good mother held most dear.

“Not so long as it was years ago, that is, in the measurement of time, at least, for to-day, you can eat your breakfast in the new world of America, one Sunday, and the following Sunday, will, as well, find you in the Old World,” replied Mr. Oldrive.

That night Elsie seemed to look longer than ever at the stars, as they peeped out of their hiding-places, and turning away from them, after long thought, she said to her mother:

“Oh, blessed mamma, Somehow, I don’t seem to care very much for all of Uncle Jack’s messages. I would so much rather have had him with us here in Hazelwood. Wouldn’t you, mamma?”

And Mrs. Lovelace felt happier to see that newer prospects, and perhaps newer happiness, had not changed the unselfishness and innocence of her little girl into undue pride and vanity. She replied:

“Yes, little daughter, and I had just begun to plan how we three, Uncle Jack, you, and I might live together as a family, but the good Father has taken him to His family of the blessed. Now, how-

ever, we can see the value of a kind word. But come, it is quite bed-time for my little girl, so say good-night to the stars, dearie."

And Elsie, as had been her custom ever since that summer evening, when, in the twilight, she sat by the bedside of Faith Goodwin and learned from her the pretty fancy to call the stars "sky lanterns," angels guiding lights to those below, looked up to the sky, and felt a comfort in the thought, and said to her mother,

"Well, blessed mamma, one little friend will go with us over the water, anyway—sister Faith!"

. . . . .

And so, our last parting glance at Hazelwood, our last look out of the windows of Falcons-height, must be at

the close of the winter's day, with the moonbeams dancing over the snow-drifts piled high outside, and the twinkling stars keeping vigils over all, and if one star seems to shine brighter than all others, let us name it, as did Elsie Lovelace, in memory of that angel spirit, Faith Goodwin, seeming to say to her little foster-sister:

“God be with you in your new home, little sister! I shall still shine on, and be your guardian angel to greet you over the water.”

• • • • • • •  
And over all shines the Christmas star  
of peace.





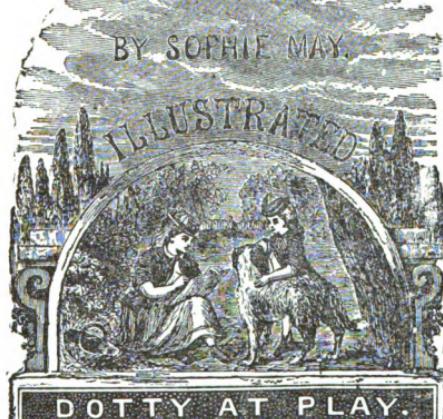


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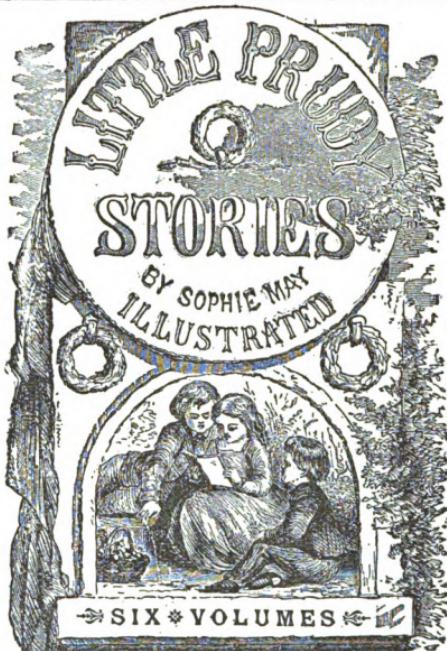
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